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Spring 1992

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Nevada
Historical Society Quarterly

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EARLY YEARS, EARLY WORKERS: The Genesis of The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Robert W. Davenport

The rise of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas—UNLV—which today serves nearly 20,000 students, is one of the success stories in the expansion of higher education after World War II. In 1982 it marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding. However, as this article will show, the founding was a process that involved years of lobbying, fund raising, and pioneering outreach by the University of Nevada before the first Las Vegas building opened in 1957. A significant factor in the process was the university's philosophy that encouraged expansion of programs beyond the single campus in Reno to meet the needs of those who found it difficult if not impossible to go there for their educations.

The Las Vegas campus was born of necessity. At war's end Clark County, with Las Vegas as its population center, was on the threshold of major growth. Nevada's southern-most county, it had benefited from a variety of economic stimulators, principally the large federal expenditures for Hoover Dam, a titanium metals plant in Henderson, and military installations. In 1949, Nellis Air Force Base was established near Las Vegas. The following year the local economy began to profit from the atomic test facility on the desolate desert lands seventy miles to the north. More significant, Las Vegas, an isolated, dusty oasis of about 25,000, was being transformed into a major resort city with a diverse population. Despite that growth, Reno, with a 1950 population of 32,497, was Nevada's economic, political, and cultural center. And to most Reno residents, Las Vegas was a backwater in nearly every way. However, by 1950 five spectacular hotels on the Las Vegas Strip were luring thousands to what would become an entertainment capital of the world. While it was becoming a trendsetter in popular culture, Las Vegas still lacked most of the amenities of larger communities, including provisions for higher education. This issue quickly became an important priority for civic leaders and teachers in southern Nevada.

The only opportunity for Las Vegans to obtain a college degree in Nevada was

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at the state university in Reno, 450 miles to the north. Established in Elko as a land-grant institution in the 1870s, it languished until the legislature moved it to Reno in 1887. Although a university in name, it was essentially a conservative liberal arts college with no more than 1,000 students until the 1920s. In a state with few resources and low taxes, it was perennially underfunded. The enrollment reached 2,000 only after World War II. Although the campus resembled a picturesque New England school, many of the buildings were antiquated. It badly needed an infusion of money if it were to gain the expanded curriculum and research facilities that would make it a true university.

Whether a prospective southern Nevada student attended the university in Reno or went to an out-of-state school, acquiring a college degree represented a hardship for those who could not afford to leave home. It was also difficult for teachers who needed continuing education for recertification and advancement. Many attended summer school in Reno or at Northern Arizona College at Flagstaff. Eventually, at the request of Nevada teachers, Northern Arizona College provided weekend extension courses during the year at Kingman, Arizona, a shorter round-trip commute of 180 miles. This outreach program regularly attracted upward of 150 Nevada teachers yearly. Clearly, the need was there, but with only 160,000 residents and a small tax base, Nevada was slow to respond. Shortly after World War II, however, southern Nevadans began to lobby the state legislature to establish at least a junior college, although they had in mind ultimately a second university in their part of the state. Particularly active was the Clark County Civic Service Federation, a group of about two dozen organizations working for local improvements.

Interest was especially strong in Boulder City, the construction town for Hoover Dam, still under federal control in 1950. Many Boulder residents were government employees and had been to college. They thought their quiet little town, with no bars or gambling, would be an ideal place for a campus. Almost thirty people, some of them members of the Civic Service Federation, worked to get endorsements from school boards, unions, veterans' organizations, civic groups, and politicians as a first step toward legislation. J. M. Higgins, a local barber and first Boulder citizen to be elected to the state legislature, met resistance when he sought an endorsement at a statewide meeting of educators in the late 1940s. The argument he heard was that Nevada could not afford to expand its higher education offerings beyond the campus in Reno, which provided adequately for the state. This was the view of the university's elected Board of Regents, including John E. Cahlan, Las Vegas regent from 1947 to 1951, who said, "if one university was only fair, two . . . would be doubly poor."[1]

Still Boulder City advocates persisted. Elton Garrett, a Boulder City newspaperman and former educator, asked Nevada's United States Senator Patrick M. McCarran to delay removal of the larger buildings and barracks from Fort Williston, a wartime army installation in Boulder, in case the state decided to use them for a college. However, Boulder City, twenty-five miles from the population

center in Las Vegas, was an unlikely site for a campus and lacked support from other advocates of a southern Nevada campus. These included Maude Frazier, a formidable ally who had worked tirelessly for many years to improve education in Nevada.[2]

Frazier had come to the Silver State in 1906 from Wisconsin for the adventure of teaching on the frontier. It was everything she could have hoped for. She lived in a succession of mining camps, teaching in primitive one-room schools. At Genoa, she had only a stove, a few desks, and a worn-out dictionary; and at Seven Troughs, near Lovelock, she taught sixty children in double sessions. Never married, she befriended people of all walks, rode with ranch hands, and, although a strict disciplinarian, was beloved by her students. She was also an outspoken advocate for the improvement of the schoolteacher's lot. In 1921 she was appointed deputy superintendent of schools for southern Nevada. The job, previously held by men, required her to supervise sixty-three school districts in a territory of 40,000 square miles. She traveled alone, carrying a shovel in her Dodge roadster to rebuild washed-out roads. If boulders were too large to remove, she would pile dirt around them so that cars could drive over the top. Her successor, Elbert Edwards, said that when he later made the same rounds he benefitted from the approaches Frazier had built.

In 1927 she became superintendent of the Las Vegas schools, a post she held for nineteen years. Frazier fought to raise teachers' salaries and for pensions and a longer school year in rural areas. After World War II she added higher education to her agenda. She had lobbied the legislature for years, and in 1950 she was elected to the Assembly, where the "grand old gal" served until she was appointed Nevada's first female lieutenant governor twelve years later, at the age of eighty-one.[3]

In her first term in the legislature, Frazier sponsored a bill to permit local school districts to offer junior college courses in the high schools. It was all she could expect to get at the time. Despite growth in the south, the political power and preponderance of votes in the legislature were still in the northern part of the state. Clark, Lincoln, and Nye counties held only nine of the forty-three Assembly seats and three of the seventeen in the Senate. The bill passed because the school districts were not required to provide the program and students who enrolled would pay fees equal to those charged by the state university. To Frazier it was a chance to get something started in Clark County, although her ultimate goal was a four-year institution.[4] The plan went awry when the attorney general declared it unconstitutional on the grounds that public high schools could not charge tuition.[5]

Meanwhile, support appeared from an unexpected source. In 1950, the Air Force appealed to the University of Nevada to provide a full undergraduate program for the more than 2,000 military people and civilians at Nellis. "The Air Force is pushing to educate its personnel," wrote the base education officer to the university's president Gilbert Parker. "It is pretty safe to say that this base is

Maude Frazier, a pioneer in education in southern Nevada, who was instrumental in establishing the southern campus of the University of Nevada. (*Special Collections, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library*)

the only one in the country without educational facilities."[6] Although the Air Force was willing to fund the program and the university regents expressed definite interest, negotiations broke down. The university insisted that candidates for degrees complete a year's residency on the Reno campus, an impossible requirement for servicemen. In addition, university officials wanted Clark County residents to be able to enroll in the program at no expense to the state. The Air Force objected to having them on the base for security reasons and considered building an annex for civilians. Ultimately, Nellis officials selected the University of Southern California to meet their needs. It made no such demands and promised to provide a much more comprehensive program, including a master's degree. The following year the base education officer chided the state university for its rigidity and lack of vision. Lt. Cyril Bendorf wrote to President Malcolm Love, "the future of education in . . . Nevada depends on the University of Nevada. However, we do not feel that the future of education in Southern Nevada depends on Nellis Air Force Base."[7]

The Board of Regents and school administrators soon recognized the needs of southern Nevada, and they decided in the summer of 1951 that they should set up an extension program in Las Vegas. Their motives, however, were not altogether altruistic. They understood that Clark County's political power would grow with its population and that southern Nevadans might be able in the future to cause the legislature to create a separate university. This was Maude Frazier's preference. Also, she was pointing out that private schools might fill the void if the University of Nevada failed to do it. Faculty from Brigham Young University taught four education courses in Las Vegas in 1951, and a local Mormon leader reported that some residents had approached church officials in Utah about establishing a junior college in Las Vegas. If higher education in southern Nevada became the domain of one or more private schools, as had occurred in southern California in the 1880s, it might jeopardize financial support in the south for the state university. Better to do something than nothing.[8]

The task of building the Las Vegas extension program fell to James Rosseau Dickinson, who accepted the assignment most reluctantly. A thirty-four-year-old instructor in the English Department, he had joined the Reno faculty two years earlier and was under pressure to complete his doctoral dissertation within one year if he was to keep his job. The prospects were dim. His professors at Stanford University were calling for more research on his project, an erudite study of the literary significance of John Eachard, a witty seventeenth-century English author, educator, and clergyman. Since the Las Vegas job was under extension services, whoever took it would not be subject to tenure requirements. Dickinson was popular both with students and colleagues, and Robert Gorrell, his department chairman, saw this as an opportunity to help him through a difficult time until he had completed his Ph.D. degree. Gorrell recommended Dickinson to higher administrators, who agreed to the selection.[9]

Dickinson and his wife, Marjorie, were originally from Florida, where he earned a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Florida in 1939. After teaching high school for several years in Winter Haven and Lakeland, Florida, he served three uneventful years in the United States Navy during the war as a pharmacist's mate in the Aleutian Islands. Forbidden to reveal his actual location, he wrote to his wife, "I'll continue writing to you regularly, and eventually I'll tell you where I'm at too." From that, she knew that he was stationed on Attu Island. He put his literary talent to use by helping other men write love letters. When the war ended, he pursued the doctorate in English at Stanford while his wife took a master's degree in music education. They went to Reno in 1949, where he began his college teaching career and she was active in musical productions.

It took some doing to convince Dickinson to move to Las Vegas, and even more for Marjorie. While at Stanford she had embarked on a promising career as a professional singer and actress. She performed with Stanford's opera workshop and sang the soprano lead in Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* at the San Francisco Opera House. Later she sang in summer stock light opera productions of St. John Terrell's Music Circus in Lambertville, New Jersey, while Dickinson engaged in research at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. By the time they moved to southern Nevada she was well known in California opera circles. To the Dickinsons, as for many others, moving to Las Vegas was a cultural shock. Aside from the movies and popular entertainment on the Strip, about the only dramatic or musical programs were in the Mormon churches. Southern Nevadans interested in cultural enrichment were ready for the handsome gentleman-scholar and his vivacious wife and embraced them as pioneers.[10]

In September 1951, Harold Brown, professor of education and director of summer sessions, arrived in Las Vegas with Gorrell and Dickinson to locate classrooms and recruit students. The extension program was to be a modest endeavor, with no special funding. They expected that the part-time faculty hired to assist Dickinson would be financed by student fees. Fortunately, R. Guild Gray, principal of Las Vegas High School, provided classrooms free of charge for use at night. Mrs. Lee Pivornick, a popular French teacher at the high school, and Arthur Palmer, another teacher who the year before had been principal of an Indian school, agreed to teach lower-division courses in French and geography. Both were well qualified. Dickinson advertised the fact that the French government had honored Pivornick with the coveted *Palmes Académiques*, an award for those who make an outstanding contribution to advancing knowledge of French language and culture. Rounding out the curriculum were Dickinson's courses in English composition, literature, and United States history.

Despite his efforts to build enrollment, it remained disappointingly small. The classes attracted only forty-one students the first year. In the next two years, the

James R. Dickinson (left), director of the Las Vegas extension program, receives the first contribution in the 1955 campus fund drive from Las Vegas Mayor C. D. Baker. (*Special Collections, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library*)

total enrollment was seventy-seven each year. And most of the increase was from nonmatriculated students, who accounted for about half the enrollment. Dickinson was determined, however, to maintain high standards because the courses were fully accredited and accepted toward degrees at Reno and at other

schools. For at least four years he was careful to use the mother school's course outlines, reading assignments, and examinations.

By the spring of 1953 he was agonizing over the program's offerings. The curriculum suffered, he believed, because it was too limited. The Air Force had stated that its men wanted courses in English, mathematics, and science. Why French and geography (actually climatology and resource conservation) were offered first was never explained. Dickinson wrote to Brown that they should consider dropping unpopular courses, such as English composition and climatology, and add math, science, and education courses. Continuing to hold all classes at night was inevitable, since most students had day jobs. Dickinson made it clear that the program could not grow without financial support.[11] Unfortunately, this was not forthcoming, and after three years he was still the only full-time university employee in Las Vegas. However, growth was steady, and by fall of 1954 there were 79 full-time freshman students and 224 part-timers.

Meanwhile in Reno, a new president—the most controversial in the school's history—had come aboard in 1952. The regents hired Minard W. Stout to make the university more responsive to the needs of the 1950s, as they saw them. This meant that he had to break the power of the faculty, especially in the largest college, Arts and Science. Stout, who had been a high school administrator with a degree in education, was a builder whose ideas and background were objectionable to the traditional scholars who had greatly influenced academic policies. The regents wanted administrators, more accountable to them, to make such decisions, and not the stodgy faculty.

The regents gave Stout a free hand. He went to war with most of the faculty, whom he considered to be elitists, and, in the process, ran the school the way General Patton had run his army. He expected unswerving loyalty from his administrative appointees and protected them in their actions. Decisions were to be made through a chain of command that effectively curtailed most faculty power. To Stout, who described himself as "a mean bastard," academic freedom extended only to a professor's area of expertise, not to other activities on campus, and tenure could easily be rescinded. He upset the faculty with his proposal that entrance standards be lowered to make the university accessible to any Nevada high school graduate, regardless of grades. Criticism of this and other policies caused him to attempt, unsuccessfully, to fire five tenured professors, including Gorrell, Robert Hume, and Charlton Laird, all good friends of Dickinson. The best known was Frank Richardson, a biologist, whose case attracted national attention and censure of the university by the American Association of University Professors.[12]

Behind the turmoil was a controversy among educators nationwide as to what direction higher education should take in order best to prepare graduates for their life experiences. On one side were the traditionalists in arts and sciences, and on the other the educationists, who wanted more resources put into voca-

tional and professional training. They also believed in extending university services to provide people with training in their own communities. The Reno traditionalists, who preferred to do a few things well rather than risk doing many poorly, considered the new direction a threat to the liberal arts and to support for their research activities. Stout and his lieutenants were educationists, and their commitment to extending university services benefited the Las Vegas branch. Even so, Stout gave Dickinson some anxious moments.

Dickinson had stated publicly in 1953 that he was building a streetcar university, serving students who lived at home and would not need dormitories. When Stout heard of this he was furious. Apparently he interpreted Dickinson's remarks as derogatory; commuter schools were considered by most educators at the time to be second-rate institutions. Stout, acting impulsively, called Gorrell and threatened to close the branch. When Gorrell pointed out the political consequences of thus irritating southern Nevadans, Stout quickly reconsidered. He had been supportive of the southern outreach, but he lacked confidence in Dickinson's ability to develop the program. Besides, Stout preferred to have his own people run things. Dickinson never crossed the president, but he had been part of the English Department, which Stout considered a nest of troublemakers. Possibly it was not so much what Dickinson said that upset Stout but the fact that it was he who appeared to be defining the character of the southern branch. Stout insisted on being the one to do such things.[13]

Despite his authoritarian style and controversial acts, which ultimately got him fired in 1957, Stout was praised for impressive accomplishments in fund raising for the Reno campus. During his tenure, state appropriations and bonding increased 300 percent. The library budget rose from a mere $40,000 in 1952–53 to more than $110,000 five years later. The support he enjoyed in the legislature and the community was reflected in a tenfold increase in private gifts in less than five years. There were new buildings, the first since 1941; the campus almost doubled in size; the faculty grew by more than 50 percent; and faculty salaries became competitive with those in surrounding states. Five new schools and colleges were established. These included the former Las Vegas branch, now upgraded to a junior college known as the Southern Regional Division, or Nevada Southern.

The decision to commit more resources to Las Vegas was made by the Board of Regents at their first meeting there in October 1954. It was an eye-opening experience. Four of the five regents were from Reno. As they drove into town they passed row after row of houses under construction, and they were amazed that as many as 300 residents attended the meeting, demanding a campus and a full junior college program. Although Stout made it clear that the building needs of Reno would come first, the regents pledged to expand the program. They heard some convincing arguments. Herbert McDonald, managing director of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, pointed out that the area had grown from 48,000 in 1950 to 86,000 in four years and was expected to go to 100,000 by

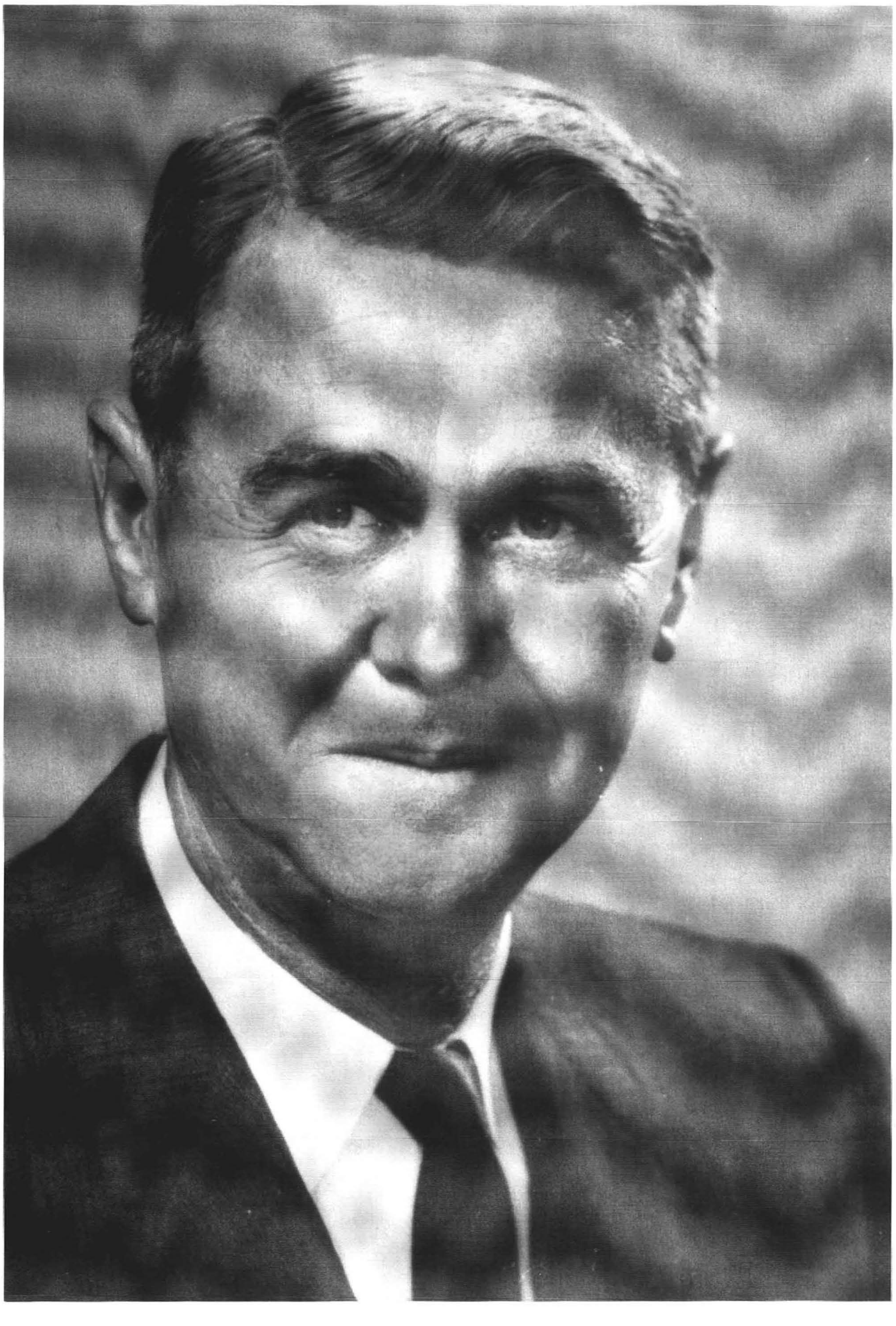
1960. R. Guild Gray, the school superintendent, said that while 50 percent of Reno's high school graduates went to college, this was true of only 30 percent of those in Clark County, mainly because they could not afford to leave home. Having heard these and other arguments, the Las Vegas regent, Archie Grant, a Ford dealer, urged the citizens to put pressure on the legislature at its 1955 session. Frazier said the Clark County delegation would work hard for an appropriation, but not at the expense of the Reno campus.[14]

The first step in developing a proposal for the legislature was to locate land for a campus. Much of the Las Vegas Valley was still unimproved, federally owned desert land, particularly the area west of town in Charleston Heights and along Boulder Highway between Las Vegas and Henderson. Originally all private property in the valley was federal land, obtained by homestead or purchase at $1.25 per acre. In addition, the state could still acquire land from the federal government under an allotment given it at statehood in 1864. Like federal lands, these were also being sold for $1.25 per acre. The regents pressed Governor Charles Russell to have the state request federal land for a Las Vegas campus. Chairman Silas Ross of Reno pointed out that expected growth from hotel construction required action, since growing high school enrollment would force the college classes out of the quarters provided by the high school.[15] Although this request would have cost the state nothing, apparently no action was taken. However, other possibilities appeared.

Offers to donate land came from the cities of Boulder City and Henderson, from a property owner in Rainbow Valley on the Tonopah Highway northwest of Las Vegas, and from several owners in Paradise Valley, about ten miles south of the city. The most desirable was the possibility of 80 to 480 acres belonging to the Union Pacific Railroad in the oldest part of town, known as the Old Ranch, adjacent to the future Rancho High School. Stout and William R. Wood, his new director of statewide development, entered into secret and sensitive negotiations with railroad officials in June 1954 to work out a gift or sale proposal. The entire parcel had a market value of about $2 million, and Stout was hoping to get it as a gift.

The location, only vaguely described, was to include the Old Mormon Fort at Washington and Las Vegas boulevards, which Stout promised to develop as a museum on the campus. Depending on how much land the railroad would make available, he outlined possibilities for a school for about 1,500 students, research facilities for "farming, ranching, conservation, and wildlife management," and possibly housing for staff and noncommuting students. Stout and Wood worked hard to obtain the land, but railroad officials backed out when news of the negotiations was leaked to the press, most likely by a railroad employee.[16]

To university officials and others like Frazier and Gray, it was important to acquire land close to the city, since students commuted and most had jobs. They could have applied for land from the federal government, but that would have



R. Guild Gray, superintendent of schools for Clark County, and a major supporter of establishing the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. (*Special Collections, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*)

taken too long; they wanted something in hand by the time the legislature convened in January 1955. The most promising offer came from Mrs. Estelle Wilbourn, wife of a Modesto, California, real estate developer. She proposed to give 60 acres in Paradise Valley, two miles east of the Las Vegas Strip, if the university would pay her $35,000 for an adjoining 20 acres. Mrs. Wilbourn would make the gift in memory of her mother, Anita Julia Cornish, a Nevada pioneer whose husband had helped to build and operate the Sutro Tunnel on the Comstock.

However, there was a catch: Wilbourn did not actually own the land at the time she made the offer. She had attempted to buy it (part of a 280-acre parcel at the corner of Flamingo Road and Maryland Parkway) from the federal government, which refused her request. Later the state acquired the 280 acres, and Wilbourn promptly filed but had not paid for it. The university tried to block the purchase and acquire the land directly from the state. It charged that Wilbourn had not complied with a federal requirement that a purchaser of land given to the states be an "actual settler and bona fide occupant." Only wildlife, including rattlesnakes, desert foxes, and jack rabbits, occupied that land. Nevertheless, the Nevada attorney general ruled in favor of Wilbourn, citing the fact that the federal government had not objected in the past when the state had not observed the requirement.[17]

In retrospect, it is regrettable that the land law permitted the interests of an individual to take precedence over the needs of the state. The state, in essence, virtually gave away property which it almost immediately bought back for its own use at a much higher price.

Gray and Ray Germain, a local newspaperman, as members of an ad hoc local committee formed to arrange a land deal, made the decision to accept Wilbourn's offer. They proceeded without consulting state or county officials. "We felt the location was the best and that we should get on this thing before somebody changes his mind," Gray later recalled. It was pure opportunism.[18] Once the decision was made, university officials made every effort to help Wilbourn obtain title to the land early in 1956.

It was an especially good deal for Wilbourn. She acquired the entire 280 acres from the state for $350.[19] When she later revealed that she had had two influential silent partners in her purchase (the chief clerk of the Assembly and Wayne McLeod, the former state surveyor general), Stout's reaction was, "I feel we have been used a bit."[20] The Reno press called it a scandal and demanded that state lands be sold at market value. In Wilbourn's case that would have been about $2,000 per acre. However, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* denied that there had been any wrongdoing. Wilbourn was simply making money the old-fashioned way, the way thousands of others in Nevada had for nearly a century. If there was any fault, it was with the state's antiquated land laws. (The northern Nevada press uncovered several other recent land purchases that had benefited state legislators, a grand jury investigated, and the law was changed in 1957 to

require that sales of state lands be at market value and for at least $3.00 per acre.[21])

In the 1955 legislative session, Clark County's Senator B. Mahlon Brown had introduced a bill calling for the appropriation of $200,000 for a building for the Las Vegas campus. To ward off opposition from northern lawmakers, the bill contained a proviso that southern Nevadans would have to raise the $35,000 necessary to acquire the land before the university's option to buy the Wilbourn land expired at the end of June 1956. The bill hit a snag when Senator Kenneth Johnson (R-Ormsby County), chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, announced that there was no chance in that session for funding a southern campus. He was alleged to have said that the students could go to Reno. The Las Vegas press erupted and organized a protest campaign. A deluge of letters, telegrams, and petitions with hundreds of names descended on Johnson's office. He capitulated and the appropriation bill passed both houses. More than money was involved; Johnson had touched a sensitive nerve. Southern Nevadans were becoming tired of being told to sit in the back of the bus and were sending a message to the rest of the state that legislators with ambitions for statewide office would have to reckon with them at the polls.

Gray headed a grass-roots campaign to raise not just the $35,000 for the land, but an additional $100,000. The legislature had provided only for the building. The extra money was needed to buy furniture, library books, science equipment, water and sewage facilities, and landscaping. He turned to the Schoolmaster's Club, a group of about twenty-five male Las Vegas teachers organized for socializing and to undertake service projects. Gray and other club members gave talks to organizations, issued press releases and fact sheets, and mobilized other community leaders to help in the campaign. They were aided by regent Archie Grant and by Robert Laxalt, the university's information officer, who came from Reno to assist with press releases and other matters. Contacting 113 organizations, they stressed not only the school's cultural attractions but something that might mean even more to prospective donors: "What would 1,200 students enrolled in a local university mean to the economic welfare of our county?" their fact sheet asked. The estimate was $500,000, money they figured the students would spend attending the school. The payroll would be another $1,500,000 annually.

"There are over 800 public school teachers in the County. . . . Every year, hundreds of these teachers take Clark County dollars to other places to go to summer school," the fund raisers pointed out. Another benefit would come from the students themselves, who could provide a labor force for local businesses. They stressed the fact that Clark County was farther from a college or university than any area in the United States with a comparable population and that the county needed to keep its most valuable resource, its young men and women, at home. Once they left, many never returned. And by 1959 about 750 of the county's high school graduates would be prospective college students.[22]

Among the fund-drive solicitation efforts, the one fondly remembered by participants was the door-to-door porchlight campaign, which raised $21,000 in one night in the spring of 1955. Scores of volunteers, about seventy of whom were college and high school students, moved into neighborhoods in Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson, and Boulder City. They were organized into districts, each group headed by a teacher. They carried milk cartons to receive donations at homes where they saw a porchlight burning, and they recorded the donors' names and the amounts given. Residents had been alerted by full-page newspaper ads and a special television show on both local channels. Entertainers from Strip hotels joined President Stout, Dickinson, and others in urging participation. Dickinson also talked on the radio for twenty-four hours, and both local newspapers lent enthusiastic support.

"It will be a sad day for Las Vegas if the campaign fails, in the midst of about $50,000,000 worth of gambling construction here in 1955," said the *Las Vegas Sun*. But when it was over, the drive had raised only about $50,000, an amount far short of the $135,000 goal. The *Sun* had expected that the hotels and casinos would give generously, as they had in previous charity drives.[23] So did Gray and the Schoolmasters. Joe W. Brown, owner of the Horseshoe Club, had summoned about thirty leading gamblers to a meeting at the Sal Sagev Hotel where Gray appealed for their support. Unfortunately, only a few responded. Some, like Brown, gave as individuals, but the record shows that the only donations from hotels were the $1,000 from the Golden Nugget and $500 from the El Cortez. Gray later said that mob interests, entrenched in a number of Las Vegas resorts, particularly opposed the project. A college or university, they reasoned, would be an undesirable influence.[24]

Another obstacle appeared that summer. Maude Frazier was disturbed because the lawyers she had approached were refusing to make donations because of rumors, which proved unfounded, that mining claims already filed on the land would prevent Wilbourn from getting title and that the whole deal was thus problematical.[25] There were also those who disapproved of the profit Wilbourn would make. But despite pockets of resistance, the fund raisers persevered and ended the drive in February 1956.

Although there were some large donations (the Service League of Las Vegas raised $4,000), the typical gift was between $5.00 and $25.00, from at least 737 individuals. In addition, contributions came from labor unions, businesses, clubs, lodges, and schools. Their names and the amounts given were recorded in the Book of Donors, the most prized artifact in the UNLV Archives. The book and other records of the fund drive disappeared after the campaign ended, but, fortunately, through the efforts of Nanelia Doughty, an English instructor at UNLV, the book was located about ten years later.[26] Although the drive failed to reach its overly ambitious goal, it demonstrated the substantial interest that southern Nevadans had in developing higher education in their part of the state.

That development had been steady, particularly after the arrival of William R.

Wood, whom Stout hired in 1954 as director of statewide development and vice president for academic affairs. Wood, a dynamic administrator with a doctorate in English literature, had become a missionary in the community college movement after heading the nation's first community college in Evanston, Illinois. He later worked in junior college development for the United States Office of Education. He was particularly interested in the Las Vegas branch because it was starting from scratch, providing opportunity for innovation. He and Dickinson, who was named resident director in 1954, worked closely. As Dickinson's superior, Wood recruited full-time faculty, found funds in his budget for the southern operation, and, unless Stout intervened, made final decisions on academic and business matters. And it was he who named the school Nevada Southern, although officially it was the Southern Regional Division from 1954 to 1964. Then it became Nevada Southern University, and five years later the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

To Wood, the University of Nevada, as a land-grant institution, had an obligation to bring education to the state's people, wherever they lived. It should provide courses that they wanted and needed, academic or vocational. Wood believed that southern Nevadans, particularly, needed one- or two-year programs of practical education, such as in nursing, secretarial work, drafting, accounting, and metallurgy. He theorized that if all higher education in the state could be kept under one tent, with one board of regents, Nevada could avoid the warfare that states such as Arizona and New Mexico had experienced with independent, competing schools. The university did broaden its curriculum, and his vision was later reflected when the Desert Research Institute was created as part of the state's university system.

Wood set to work with Dickinson to build what quickly became more than a junior college. Its goal was to provide the first two years of college for regular students, an evening program of adult education, and badly needed teacher training courses. Despite the *Review-Journal* headline "Proposed University of Nevada Branch Will Specialize in Technical Skills," the curriculum was fairly traditional and geared to students in the four-year college track. They could get a start in Las Vegas but were expected to spend time on the Reno campus if they hoped to get a degree.[27]

After a successful summer session in 1954, which featured instructors from Reno, a full freshman program was offered in the fall, with day as well as evening classes. More than 275 students enrolled, elected class officers, and organized student activities. Although most were only part-time students, an enthusiastic Wood wrote to a friend, "We're going places!"[28] And he enjoyed telling of teachers who had commuted from Mesquite and Caliente for summer school and of a woman who regularly drove 127 miles to attend a class. By the next year the total enrollment was 348, of whom 167 were attending full time. By fall of 1957 the total enrollment was well over 500.

The faculty grew correspondingly. Joining Dickinson in the fall of 1954 were

more than fifteen part-time faculty. Part of Dickinson's job was to recruit qualified local professionals who could teach one or two courses, since funds for full-time faculty were not available until the following year. This was a challenge, and Wood encouraged him to improvise. When they were having trouble finding someone to teach personal psychology, Wood suggested that "common sense and interest in people" should be the principal qualification because the class was not a training course for professional psychologists.[29] As it turned out, Dickinson was scheduled to teach the course. But it was not all patchwork. Three of the best and purely fortuitous appointments were Effie Mona Mack, a retired high school teacher from Reno and the foremost Nevada historian; Ann Brewington, a retired University of Chicago professor; and Duncan Cleaves, a local chemist with a doctorate from the University of California. Dickinson's part-timers, most of whom held master's degrees, taught a wide variety of courses—more than sixty by the following year.

For Brewington, teaching at Nevada Southern was a new adventure after a full and distinguished career. A specialist in business education for more than thirty years and a pioneer in secretarial studies, she was ready for some pioneering in Nevada. Her sister was on the Boulder City High School faculty and their parents had moved to Las Vegas. In her letter of application to Stout, Brewington mentioned that she was related by marriage to former Nevada governor Vail Pittman, which he underlined in red. She was sixty-five when she joined the faculty as the only instructor in business education, but no one was more energetic or enthusiastic. In 1955 she was employed full time. Wood called her a "rare find," and Dickinson wrote in 1957, "Miss Brewington's only real flaw is that she doesn't have 25 more years of service for Nevada Southern. And she may at that!"[30] Despite her vitality, she was forced to retire at age seventy. In 1991 she was continuing to lead an active life in California at the age of 102.

Effie Mona Mack was another postretirement appointment. She had taught and been a principal in Nevada schools since 1909, but despite having earned a doctorate in history from the University of California, she had not held a regular college post. She relished the opportunity to teach her specialty, Nevada history, for Dickinson on a part-time basis in 1954 and as the first full-time history teacher the following year. Unfortunately, ill health forced her to resign in 1956. Despite the less-than-desirable teaching conditions in those early days, Mack wrote to Dickinson, "Nevada Southern will always have a close spot in my heart. I loved teaching there."[31]

By 1955 the full-time faculty had grown to six, with twenty-three part-timers. Frederick Ryser, a biologist, and Lauren Brink, who taught speech and drama, transferred from the Reno faculty, and Wood invited Muriel Parks to be the registrar. Ryser, an imaginative young scholar originally from the University of Wisconsin, had been hired at Reno as Frank Richardson's replacement. He complained to Stout that, as a consequence, the anti-Stout faculty members were treating him like a scab. "You should shut up about it," the president advised.

"You don't get into a pissing contest with a skunk!" Later Wood recruited Ryser to build the biology program in Las Vegas. He was lured by the adventure, the chance to study the fauna of the Mohave Desert, and by the warm dry climate, which he hoped might improve the health of his two sons, who suffered from cystic fibrosis.[32] At Wisconsin Ryser had been a student of Aldo Leopold and John Curtis; as their disciple at Nevada Southern, he taught a course in ecology which was years ahead of its time.

Another who came south that year was Lauren Brink, a good friend of Stout. He and Stout had been together at the University of Minnesota, where Brink earned his doctorate in 1950 in English education. When Stout needed to fill a vacancy in the English Department at Reno, he appointed Brink, who was teaching at San Francisco State College. The faculty disapproved. They considered Brink's qualifications somewhat shallow, and the appointment had been made—as many were in those days—with little consultation with the department faculty. Stout's action was like pouring gasoline on a fire. Brink was equally unhappy with the department and requested a transfer to Nevada Southern.[33] His ability to teach a range of courses in English, drama, speech, and education was utilized in a setting that required versatility. His effectiveness as a teacher was diminished in later years by ill health, and he retired in 1966.

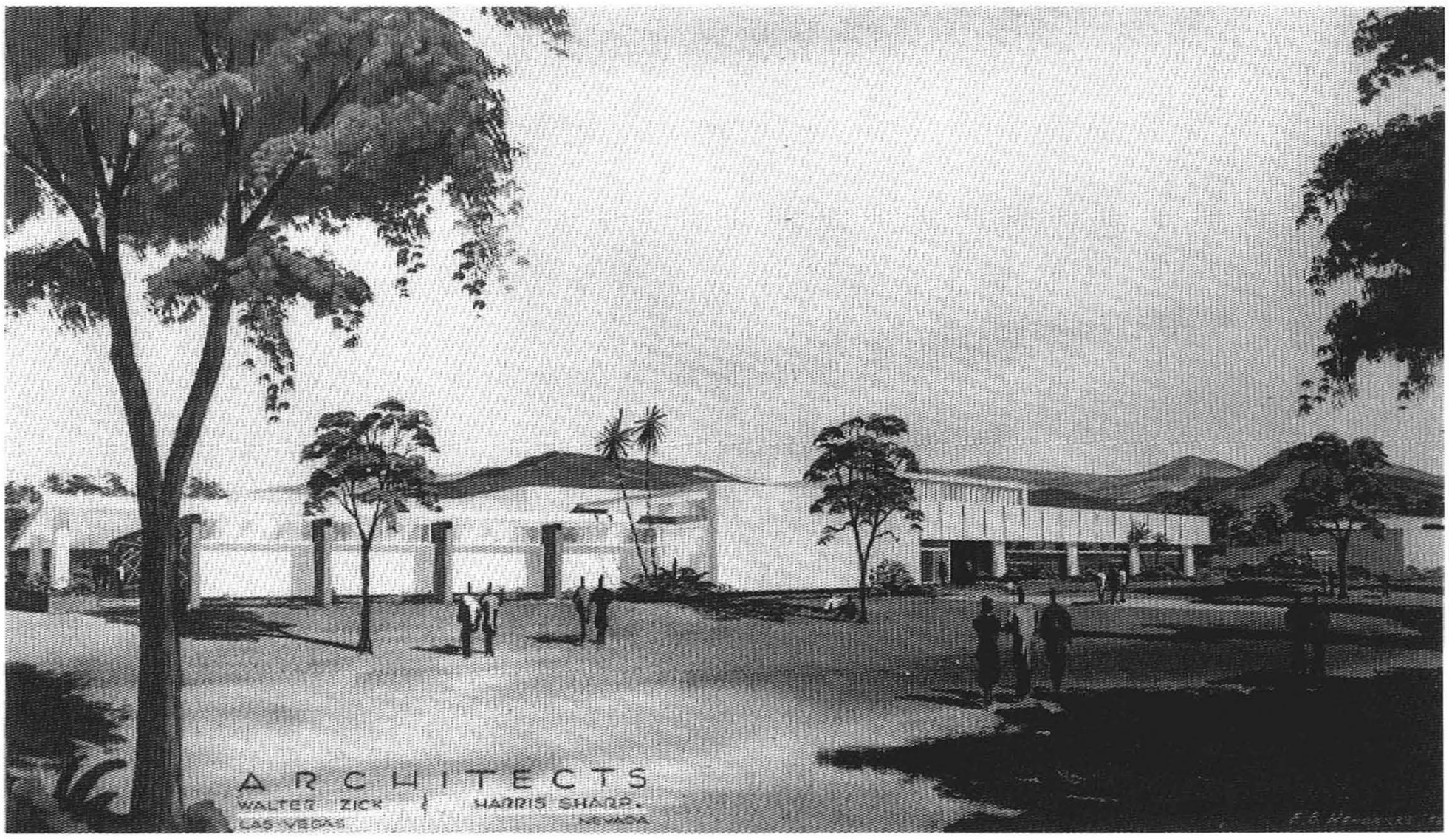
The third—and one of Wood's best appointments—was Muriel Parks, the registrar. Parks had worked for Wood at the high school in Evanston during the Depression. Unable to obtain a teaching position upon graduation from college, she offered to work without pay if Wood would give her a chance. He put her to work in the bookstore. After a semester she had proved to be indispensable to the operation and was put on the payroll. Later she became a teacher. When keeping the records for Las Vegas became too great to be handled entirely from Reno, Wood reached out to someone he knew could work well under pressure and with little to work with. Parks ran the office conscientiously and in good spirits for twenty-four years. By the time she retired her staff had grown to twenty-one people. The year after Parks arrived, Jewel Reynolds joined the staff as the first admissions officer, and she provided a greatly needed service for the growing school.

Dickinson, his staff, and students made do as best they could at Las Vegas High School until, in 1956, the university rented Sunday school rooms for additional classes at the First Baptist Church across the street. Later Ryser taught science in classrooms at the new Rancho High School. By the time the Nevada Southern campus was opened on Maryland Parkway in 1957, classes were scattered and in unlikely places. Offices at Las Vegas High School were cramped. For a time Dickinson's office was in the ticket booth and hat check room of the school's auditorium. Classes were held anywhere he could find space. This included poorly lighted and heated backstage dressing rooms, which had to be abandoned when plays were in production, and drafting rooms where, according to the student newspaper, "The sight of an entire class perched on top of

those high drafting stools listening to a lecture on William Shakespeare was to say the least, ludicrous." Students in classes at the Sunday school squirmed in chairs designed for young children.[34]

The registrar and her records were in an auditorium ticket booth, and the library was housed in one of the three classrooms upstairs. It consisted in 1955 primarily of 800 volumes donated by the university library in Reno and other books purchased with a $1,000 allocation from Wood's budget. Dickinson considered the Reno books to be mostly discards of little value, but he hired a student to build shelves in a room that also served as an office for the professors. Wood narrowly escaped injury when a bookshelf toppled over during one of his periodic visits.

As the years progressed, Dickinson was forced to take on more administrative duties, which he, as a quiet scholar and teacher, had not originally anticipated or sought. But he served enthusiastically and without complaint and, with a flair for public relations, became a popular figure in the community. Celesta Lowe, who served as his secretary, librarian, and janitor for the church classrooms, recalled that he designed the curriculum, ordered textbooks and supplies, wrote press releases, gave talks to community organizations, signed up students and, in the early days, collected their registration money on the first day of classes. In addition, he recruited part-time faculty, solicited book and scholarship donations and taught several classes, as well as completing his dissertation. He also had to keep an eye on Lowe. She had been hired to replace a previous secretary who had left to live in South America. Shortly after Lowe took the job, an envelope arrived from Reno addressed to the former secretary. Lowe duti-



The architects' rendering of Frazier Hall at Nevada Southern University. (*Special Collections, University of Nevada, Las Vegas Library*)

fully forwarded it to South America, not realizing that it contained all the paychecks for the Las Vegas staff.[35]

With enrollment rising and the regents pleading for help, the legislature in 1956 made a significant appropriation for higher education. It was a turning point for Nevada Southern. Seven new professors joined the ranks that year, bringing the total to eleven full-time and twenty-three part-time faculty. They taught a total of eighty-nine courses in the fall semester. These included some upper-division courses and even graduate courses in education. What had begun as a junior college had become a junior college out of control and well on its way to bigger things. Although still without a campus in 1956, the foundation for what ultimately (and unexpectedly to many) became a degree-granting institution independent of the mother school had been laid through the efforts of many southern Nevadans, the regents, and university officials. And the following year Maude Frazier watched with a thousand others as the Masons dedicated the cornerstone for Nevada Southern's first building, appropriately named for her. It was also a tribute to all the others who worked so hard with this noted schoolmarm of Nevada history to turn a dream into reality.

Notes

[1]John F. Cahlan, "Reminiscences of a Reno and Las Vegas Newspaperman, University Regent, and Public-Spirited Citizen" (Oral History Project, University of Nevada, Reno, 1970), 197–98.

[2]Elton Garrett, interview by the author, Boulder City, Nevada, 6 July 1991.

[3]Pat Schank, "Maude Frazier: Feisty Schoolmarm Ran Schools of Southern Nevada," *Las Vegas Review-Journal, Nevadan* magazine (16 May 1982), pp. 6L–7L; "Good LV Schools are Frazier's Memorial," *ibid* (23 May 1982), pp. 6L–7L. Frazier was quoted in 1956 as saying that lobbying the legislature for higher education in southern Nevada had begun in the 1930s, but there appears to be no evidence to support this.

[4]Guild Gray, interview by the author, Las Vegas, Nevada, 9 August 1991.

[5]Nevada *Statutes* (1951), 82–83; Nevada, Attorney General, *Report and Official Opinions* (1952), 213–16.

[6]Capt. Harold Burgess to Col. Gilbert Parker, 8 June 1950, President Records, 1912–67, AC 1, Box 1, University of Nevada, Reno, Archives (hereafter cited as PR, UNR Archives).

[7]Lt. Cyril T. Bendorf to Malcolm Love, 14 November 1951; Harold Brown to Capt. Harold E. Burgess, 18 July 1951, PR, UNR Archives.

[8]Robert Gorrell, interview by the author, Reno, Nevada, 25 July 1991; J. H. Wittwer to C. W. Creel, 26 May 1950, and Harold N. Brown to Malcolm Love, 30 July 1951, PR, UNR Archives.

[9]Gorrell, interview.

[10]Marjorie Dickinson Andersen, interview by the author, Henderson, Nevada, 1 July 1991; *Las Vegas Sun* (30 January 1961), p. 3.

[11]James R. Dickinson to Harold N. Brown, 10 April 1953, PR, UNR Archives.

[12]For a discussion of the philosophy and problems of the Stout administration, see Mary Ellen Glass, *Nevada's Turbulent '50s: Decade of Political and Economic Change* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1981), 61–72; James Hulse, *The University of Nevada: A Centennial History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974), 52–59; Dean E. McHenry *et al. The University of Nevada: An Appraisal. The Report of the University Survey,* Nevada Legislative Council Bulletin No. 28 (Carson City: State Printing Office, 1957), 27–45.

[13]Minard W. Stout, interview (tape-recorded) by James W. Hulse, Tempe, Arizona, 19 January 1973, University of Nevada, Reno, Archives; Gorrell, interview.

[14]University of Nevada, Board of Regents, *Minutes,* 7 October 1954.

[15]Board of Regents to Governor Charles M. Russell, 15 April 1954 (copy), Executive Vice-President Records, 1954–62, AC 83, Folder 2, University of Nevada, Reno, Archives (hereafter cited as EVPR, UNR Archives).

[16]William R. Wood, interview by the author, Las Vegas, Nevada, 16 September 1991; Minard W. Stout to W. H. Johnson, 15 June 1954 (copy), AC 83, Folder 5, EVPR, UNR Archives; *Las Vegas Sun* (4 June 1954), p. 1.

[17]Nevada, Attorney General, *Report* (1955), 59–61.

[18]Gray, interview.

[19]The parcel's boundaries were from the corner of Flamingo Road and Maryland Parkway south to the present University Road, west to Gym Road, north to Harmon Avenue, west to a point east of Swenson Street and north (including the present Las Vegas facility of the Desert Research Institute) to Flamingo, then east to Maryland Parkway.

[20]*Las Vegas Sun* (20 March 1956), p. 1.

[21]*Nevada State Journal* (13, 20 March 1956), p. 8; (23 March 1956), p. 11; *Reno Evening Gazette* (20 March 1956), p. 1; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (11 March 1956), p. 4; *Las Vegas Sun* (20 March 1956), p. 8. I am indebted to Keith-Ann Marien of the Nevada Division of State Lands for research assistance.

[22]"Fact Sheet, Nevada Southern Campus Fund Drive," Schoolmaster's File, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Archives (hereafter cited as UNLV Archives).

[23]*Las Vegas Sun* (27 May 1955), p. 6.

[24]Gray, interview.

[25]Maude Frazier to Minard W. Stout, 26 July 1955, AC 83, Folder 2, EVPR, UNR Archives.

[26]Nanelia Doughty, "Narrative Account of Research into the Role of the Schoolmaster's Club of Las Vegas in Establishing Nevada Southern University" (unpublished MS, 1976), Schoolmaster's File, UNLV Archives; "The Schoolmasters and UNLV," *Las Vegas Review-Journal, Nevadan* magazine (10 October 1976), pp. 4–5.

[27]Wood, interview; *Las Vegas Review-Journal* (5 February 1954), p. 6.

[28]William R. Wood to Mr. Newbry, memo "Nevada Southern," 3 December 1954, AC 1, Box 6, PR, UNR Archives.

[29]William R. Wood to James Dickinson, 22 July 1954, Dickinson Personnel File, Personnel Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

[30]Ann Brewingon to Minard Stout, 16 December 1953, and Brewington evaluation for 1957, Brewington Personnel File, UNLV Personnel Department.

[31]Effie Mona Mack to James Dickinson, 29 March 1956, Mack Personnel File, Personnel Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

[32]Frederick Ryser, telephone interview by the author, Reno, Nevada, 28 August 1991.

[33]Gorrell, interview; Ryser, interview.

[34]*Rebel Yell* (3 February 1960), p. 2.

[35]Celesta Lowe, interview (tape-recorded) by Alice Brown, Las Vegas, Nevada, 26 June 1980, Oral History Project, Special Collections Department, Library, University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

HISTORY THAT GROWS ON TREES
The Aspen Carvings of Basque Sheepherders

Jose Mallea-Olaetxe

When we hear of the Basques in Nevada or other parts of the American West, we often think of them as sheepherders.[1] That those herders make carvings on aspen trees is usually not known. Arborglyphs are found in ten or more states in the West and most of them were inscribed by Basques.

Since the messages on the trees come directly from the sheepherders, this information can be viewed as primary data on their lives. Many carvings span several years, and normally date from June through September. They are located in remote canyons, along creek banks and wet meadows, and generally above 6,000 feet of elevation. The vocabulary of the carvings is derived from several languages and much of it is slang, peppered with curses and other words difficult to translate in a meaningful way. But there is also poetry, humor, and pure art. The messages are stark, laconic, and sometimes raw. Their historical value as a record of the experience of immigration and the sheep industry is significant.[2]

Although this resource has been written about, its historical significance has not been sufficiently considered or analyzed. Of the twenty-three usually short publications that focus on the artistic aspects of the carvings, several warrant comment. Richard Lane studied the sheep industry in Elko. He visited numerous aspen groves in that county and describes the carvings as "interesting and sometimes very beautiful . . . only a small part of the necessary evidence." He identifies some of the motifs: names and dates, human and animal figures, stars and occasional references to the sheepherders' life style.[3] The interest of others, such as Frances Wallace, Hans Reiss, and Phillip Earl, lies strictly in the artistic aspects of the carvings, which they traced with paper and cloth.[4] David Beesley

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and Michael Claytor did more thorough research and have written more extensively than anyone else about aspen carvings. They visited some thirty groves in several counties of northwestern California, identifying six categories of content: names, dates, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms, ethnicity and Old World themes, personal statements, and fantasy forms. One of their articles is entitled "Aspen Art and the Sheep Industry of Nevada and Adjoining Counties." The title is misleading, however, as the two topics are completely separated; the authors never intended to use the evidence on trees to study the sheep industry. Apparently unconvinced of the historical value of the texts of the carvings, they claim that "the carved names and statements of the Basque are a minor art form compared to the rich and imaginative carved images."[5]

Past emphasis on the artistic aspects of the carvings may be attributable to the fact that most of the textual messages are not written in English, and can be read only by speakers of Basque, Spanish, and French. In some cases, this limiting factor is further compounded by physical distortion of the text resulting from bark growth. Most messages are carved in Castilian as spoken in the Basque Country, and the rest in several Basque dialects. A few are inscribed in broken English and French, and rarely a Latin word surfaces. The carvings are often grammatically incorrect, and many contain misspelled words or incomplete sentences. To understand them, one must be familiar with the culture of the herders, with Basque surnames, and with the toponymy of the Basque Country. This, plus the fact that gathering the data can be arduous and slow, may explain why no one has attempted a general and systematic analysis of the phenomenon.[6]

The data from the aspen carvings add considerably to the information on the life and world view of the Basque sheepherder in the American West. This resource supplies hundreds of names and dates, and locates them by specific mountain range. These dates allow us to track the summer and early fall movements of various individuals.

Research for this article was conducted in a dozen major aspen groves in the California and Nevada Sierra from Topaz Lake to Gerlach. In addition, three months of intensive field work were spent in four other counties in northern Nevada.[7] Although the material offered here is original, it is by no means exhaustive. There remain dozens of mountain ranges in Nevada waiting to be recorded. This is a preliminary study and the conclusions drawn should be considered as such.

Origins of Tree Carving

We shall never know how or where tree carving began, but it is common to many societies, from the Australian aborigines, who have a very intricate ochre-on-bark art, to the frontier culture of Daniel Boone.[8] Much earlier, in 1605, Juan

de Oñate, founder of New Mexico and of Basque descent, carved his name on El Morro Rock. In subsequent centuries, other Basque pioneers left their names in the southwest.[9]

Aspen art, as found in the American West, is nonexistent in the Basque Country. Four circumstances combined to favor proliferation of this activity in Nevada: the availability of aspen trees, the leisure time enjoyed by the sheepherder, his loneliness, and the privacy afforded by the remote locations of the groves. Trees and leisure time were the raw materials, loneliness supplied the inspiration, and privacy afforded the freedom of expression.

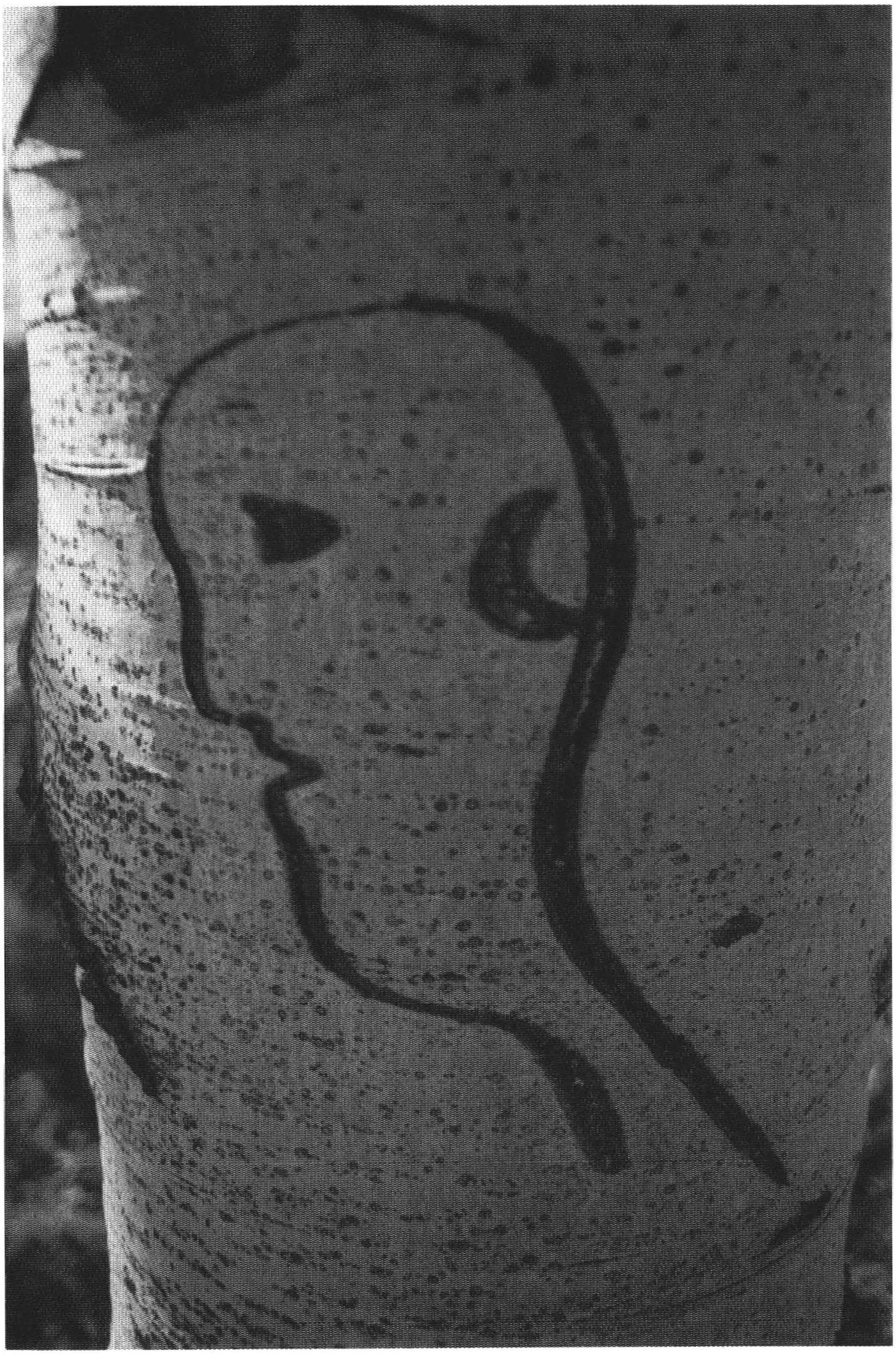
Although not all carvings in Nevada can be attributed to the Basques, the majority can be so identified.[10] The oldest carvings found so far in the northern Sierra (Portola/Quincy, California, area) bear dates between 1887 and 1892, but the carvers' names are not clear. There are carved dates of 1889 and 1890 in the south of Nevada County. It is not surprising that California has the older carvings. Not only did the sheepherders fan out from California, but the state also has more trees than Nevada. However, the survival rate of carvings has less to do with the abundance of trees and the amount of arborglyphic activity than with the age of the aspen trees. The average life span of aspens (popularly known as quakies) is sixty to eighty years. The older or larger the tree, the more likely it was to have been carved.

On the eastern side of the Sierra, the earliest carvings date back to the turn of the century. About half a dozen herders of that period, working in the Marlette/Spooner and Genoa peak areas, have been identified. Some of the largest aspens are standing on the shore of Spooner Lake but, oddly enough, few contain carvings.

Emilio Alvarez, John Egoscue, Martin Banca, Anton/Antoine Inda, and A. Salet left marks of their presence on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe from 1899 to 1901. Louis Johnson (1898–1902) may also have been a herder because his name appears in two different sheep areas, alongside that of the Basques. Later Eramun Esterencuby (1909), Francisco Ezcurdia (1910), and Jesus Neri (1912) added their names. There is a fine clear etching of a woman south of Lake Tahoe, dated 1896 but not signed. Other carvers of that period recorded only their initials. As research progresses, additional names may be found.

Although most herders worked the sheep for at least several years, others continued for longer periods. In the Tahoe Basin, Ezcurdia and Banca were still carving in 1933 and 1934, respectively. Their record was surpassed by G. Paul, who also carved many trees. On Peavine Mountain alone, Paul's carvings span forty years, from 1901 to 1942. Unfortunately, he was a laconic carver, never giving more information than his first initial, last name, and the year.

Peavine is a small mountain range but was heavily used, perhaps because of its proximity to Reno. Seventy-one sheepherders, with dates from 1901 to the present, recorded their names on Peavine's aspens. Fourteen of the carvers do



A sheepherder's self-portrait, located in Humboldt County, Nevada. (*Jose Mallea-Olaetxe*)

not have surnames that are clearly Basque, which does not necessarily mean they were not from the Basque Country. The carvings provide accurate data on the past sheep business of each area and on the movement of the herders through the ranges. In the case of some prolific carvers, we can actually trace their whereabouts on a daily basis. The information would be much more valuable if we could determine what percentage of the herders engaged in carving. From the evidence on Peavine, it appears that eighteen herders did not occupy themselves in this activity. This number was reached by computing a minimum of one herder per year, an estimate that is probably too low. In 1959, seven different herders (four from Navarre, two from Basse Navarre, and one from Biscay) spent time on various parts of Peavine, although no two carved on the same day. During the ninety years of herding history on the mountain only one exception appears, on October 10, 1960, when Magencio Valencia and Juan Zabalequi (both from the town of Lerga, Navarre) carved on the same day.

In 1989, there were two herders in the area, a Peruvian and a Basque camptender who said that he never carved. A third herder, a Mexican, also spent a few days on Peavine. He did not carve either. Personal interviews with former herders have produced conflicting information. Some say that the majority (80–90 percent) of them carved, others estimate that only half did. The correct percentage, however, must be higher. A more accurate number might be gained from reviewing the books of the sheep outfits; they leased certain canyons year after year, and their lists of herders could be compared with the evidence on the trees.

Humboldt and Elko counties had the largest concentrations of Basques during the first years of the twentieth century, and the mountains and canyons in those counties contain many carvings. While there appear to be many more aspens in Elko, the field work thus far has yielded relatively few old carvings. According to retired sheepman Jess Goicoechea, beavers have wreaked havoc in many of the aspen groves. It is ironic that the oldest carving that we know of is located in Beaver Creek, west of Wildhorse Reservoir, carved by Vicondoa in 1889.[11] Nearby, in the Columbia Basin, no old carvings have been found, but the Independence Mountains might yield some of the names of the early settlers who came after Pedro Altube in the 1870s. In the Jack Creek area, several names dated in the first decade of the century are Oroz, Laca, and Lundatea (or Landatea). The oldest carving in the Toe Jam mountains, northwest of Tuscarora, is by Pete Elgart in 1913. He also herded in eastern Lake Tahoe in the 1930s. Future research in the Independence Mountains might be more fruitful. However, entire sections of groves have been bulldozed by mining companies over the years, and others may also be threatened.

The trees of the rugged Ruby Range south of Elko remain largely unrecorded. Some of the canyons visited in August of 1990 contained interesting information, but few old carvings. In Mitchell Creek, Fermin Urrezti "Bazkito" carved

from 1916 to 1922. The next canyon south is Lindsey (local Basques call it Goyeneche after a compatriot who settled there). The oldest readable carvings found so far are by Larios (1914) and by Emilio Jayo (1918). Others, dated 1904, are too distorted for any characters to be recognized. However, recording is not complete, and much more research is needed. Lower Rattlesnake Canyon, in Lee, Nevada, yielded recent carvings. The earliest was by Esteban Goicoechea, of Biscay, in 1918.

Another area that must be looked into is Bascoville. You will not find it on the map, but the local ranchers and government officials acquainted with northern Elko County know about it. The area, located within the Jarbidge Primitive Area in the Mary's River range, was heavily used by sheepherders. One of the better known Bascoville figures was Pete Itcaina, who owned thousands of sheep. Many colorful stories are told about him in Elko and Currie, where he owned ranches.

In the Jarbidge-Charleston range, some of the earliest carvers found are Ramon (ST) Garat (1901), Fausto Cia (1903), Cea (or Cia) (1907), Estanislao Ederra (1908), Olague (1909), and Jean Kopentipi (1911). On the southern border of the county in the Cherry Creek Range, the aspen groves are heavily carved, mostly by northern (French) Basques, beginning after 1910.

The northwest corner of Humboldt County has yielded one of the richest data banks so far. A surprising number of large aspens still stands in the canyons at the edge of the Black Rock Desert. Two carvings by P.E. are dated 1895 and 1896.[12] Twelve years later he was still working in the area, as indicated by his initials on other trees. His last clear date is August 2, 1907, and another, distorted carving appears to be dated 1909. This poses an intriguing question. Does P.E. stand for Pierre (Pete) Erramouspe, who was murdered by Shoshone Mike and his party of Indians in 1911? According to the United States Census and various interviews, no other herder with such initials is known to have been there. The incident occurred north of Gerlach at Little High Rock Canyon, near the Washoe-Humboldt county line, and it is possible that cattlemen and not Indians were responsible. Two other herders and one Englishman were also killed.[13] The news must have impressed the sheepherders in the area, and perhaps somewhere in that part of Nevada or in the Warner Range of eastern California there is a tree that records or echoes the episode.[14]

The Summit Lake area in northern Humboldt County has many carvings that record early-twentieth-century names and dates: Ramon Urrutibeascoa (1900), Ynasio (1900), Oroz (1901), Francisco Uriarte (1901), Usano (?), Legarza (1901), Nabarniz (1904), Bitoriano Setien (1904), and George Itcaina (1906). Leon, Belro (or Pedro) Ibarriet, Felix Arospide, Juan Goytia, Ramon Goytia, and Anitia are all dated in 1909. After 1911, six herders carved extensively in the area, all with the same last name of Uriarte: Casildo, Francisco (previously cited), Tomas, Juan, Pastor, and Pedro. The name Uriarte is of Biscayan origin, and these sheepherders may have been related to each other. The surnames of many of the

other early herders in this area are also Biscayan and, in fact, this is the only range recorded so far where names from Biscay, France, and Navarre are fairly evenly divided. In all other groves of Nevada and the Sierra, Biscayan carvers are in the minority.

This remote spot in northwest Nevada represents a singular cultural resource. The area is of prime importance because of the vast number of carvings, their antiquity, the type of information recorded, the use of the Basque language, and the art work. Furthermore, except for one or two, none of these former residents of Nevada is accounted for in the 1900 and 1910 United States Censuses. When the names are all tabulated, the Basque population of Nevada at the turn of the century will be seen as substantially higher than is now believed.

Types of Carvings

Dates and Names

The most common type of carving records only the herder's name and the date. The year is almost always included, and usually the month and day also. Sometimes birthplace, region (province), nation, and some other personal characteristics or attributes were added. Names and dates carved alone seem intended to function primarily as a herder's personal record. If hometowns and provinces were added, regional objectives may have been a factor. For instance, it appears that if a herder from Navarre was carving in a grove containing many names from Biscay, he would feel compelled to add Navarre under his name. If most carvings in the grove were of Navarrese origin, the carver was likely to include the name of his hometown. Similar reactions governed the relationships between northern Basques (French nationals) and southern Basques (Spanish nationals). The personal touches added to names provide us with clues to understanding the carver's thoughts and state of mind at the time of the carving. The following examples are literal translations:

> Santiago Presto native of Linzuain Navarra 1950
>
> Domingo Ajuria Mugica Vizcaya 1972 (Mugica is a town of the province of Biscay, where Ajuria was born)
>
> Dominique Landabure from Makaya 1930 (Makaya is a town in Lapurdi)

Carvings may follow the typical format, *Martin Ygarzabal 14 de julio año 1932*, or a variation, *Martin Ygarzabal dia 21 de julio de 1932*.[15]

The appearance of the names of both France and Spain in a grove, indicating a mixture of Basques in the area, suggests that political divisions and national pride were factors for including the country. This was probably the case whenever someone carved *Vive la France* or *Viva España*. Another consideration is that messages were often carved with readers in mind; the herder from Irisarri knew

that more people would respond to France than to Irisarri. Americans, for example, did not know what Irisarri meant. Sometimes the length of the word conditioned what was carved. Most French Basques were from Bachenabarre, or Lower Navarre, but they did not carve the word because it was too long. Navarra, on the other hand, was commonly included, as were Elko, Reno, and Ely, but not Winnemucca (for the same reason). The following are examples of dating:

Arnaud Ezponde Biba Frantzia 1945 (Ezponde's *Biba Frantzia* [long live France] may be a reference to World War II, for it appears in other carvings)

Jean Biscay Helete France 1959 (Jean Biscay from Heleta, France, 1959)

Ynacio Arrupe vizcaino (Ynacio Arrupe Biscayan)

Gillen Yrigoyen Vive la France (Gillen Yrigoyen Long live France)

Felipe Errea, navarro basco espanol (Felipe Errea, Navarrese, Basque, Spanish)

A strong sense of regionalism, an important element in all history, prevails in these Basque carvings. Those from Navarre identify themselves first with Navarre and then with Spain and the Basque Country. The French Basques were split between devotion to hometown and devotion to France. The Biscayans were the least likely to identify themselves as Spanish or from Spain.

Even though the primary spoken tongue for most herders was Basque, their writing was usually in Spanish. The French Basques, too, dated their carvings in Spanish. Castilian was the primary language of the carvings and almost everyone, including the French Basques, possessed a rudimentary knowledge of it. The Basque language, Euskara, was understood only by Basques, and those who used it did so deliberately. To write in Basque meant belonging to a special group that maintained a deep sense of cultural solidarity. The idea of exclusion of non-Basques may have been in the mind of the Basque-language carver as well:

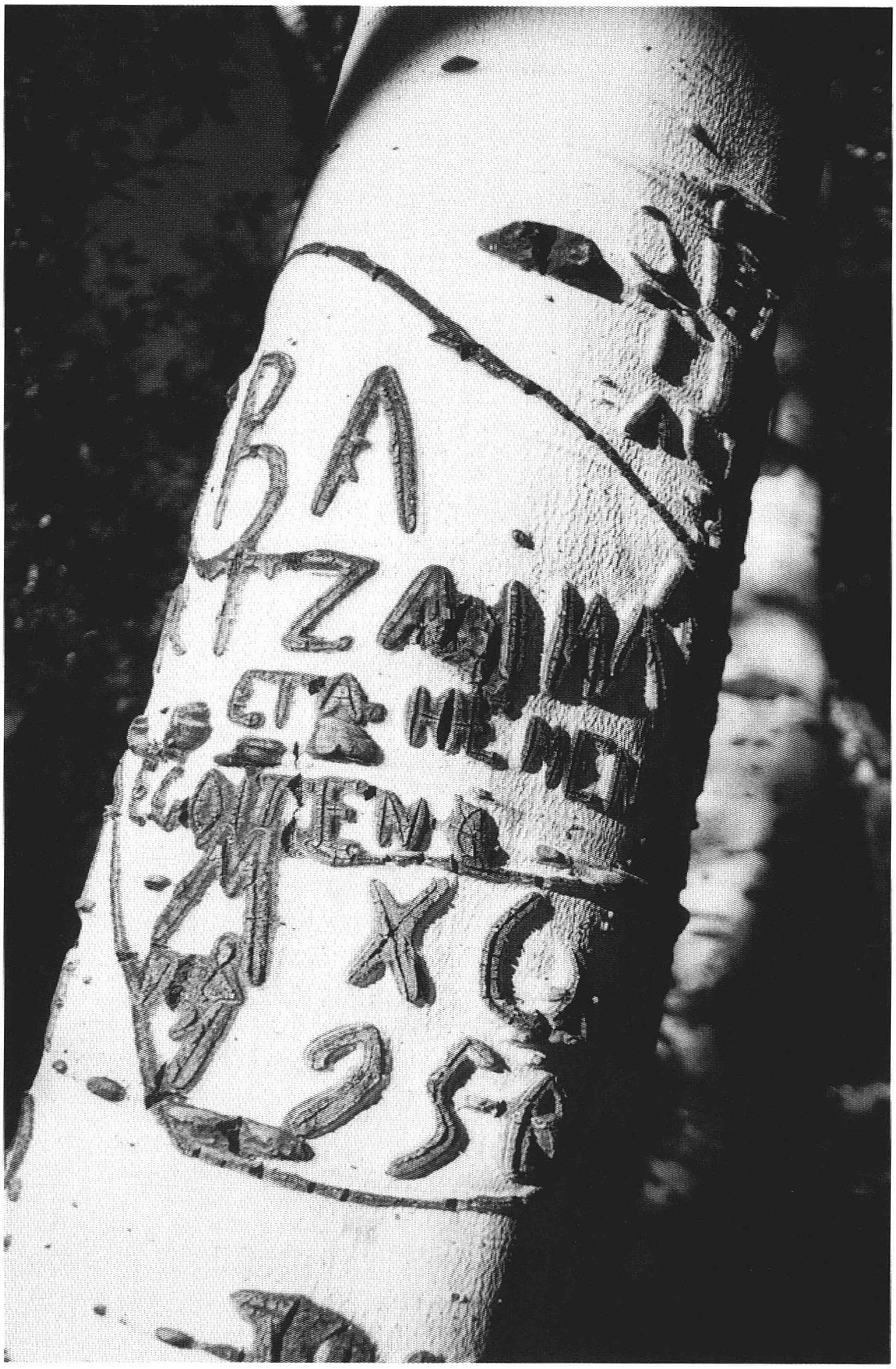
J U 1957 Iruritacoa Navarra (J.U. 1957 from Irurita, Navarre)

Justo Sarria euzkotarra 1962 (Justo Sarria Basque 1962; the word used to denote "Basque," *euzkotarra*, is modern, and is often used in a political context)

Jean Leon Borderre urepeldarra (Jean Leon Borderre native of Urepel)

Battita Barnetche, Bancara uztailaren 6 1957 (Battita Barnetche, native of Banca 6 of July 1957)

Fermin, euscalduna (Fermin, Basque speaker)



The message in Basque says: "Long live the sheepherders and those who can take this place." It is dated August 1950 and is located in the Cherry Creek Range, Elko County, Nevada. (*Jose Mallea-Olaetxe*)

Occasionally, herders added personal characterizations to convey a concept of self. Such ideas are also expressed in the impersonal mode; there follow some translated examples:

> J.Z. from Lerga [Navarre], the Spanish gentleman, 1960
>
> J.E. Navarrese Spanish, 20 years old, single, fucker
>
> R.U. and J.M.I. masters of love and whoremongering
>
> I am a poor sheepherder. I am a queer for being a sheepherder
>
> Here lives E.A., the same one, whether well or badly
>
> E. sheepherder, famous Biscayan
>
> J.I. the one with big balls

Although there are additional variations on the theme, the majority of carved names and dates conform to the pattern described above. When a herder deviated and chose an unorthodox method, the carving usually contains a great deal of personal information. One in particular took a long time to decipher because the message was cryptic, written in Basque with the words in random order: *Houchou trampa buhamiia lacotea philopina hortz haundia*. Literally translated, this means: "Wild dove trap, gypsy, lacotea, Philopina, one with big teeth." The words are clear, but not their meaning. One day by chance, a Basque family from Europe was visiting at the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada, Reno. They were from the same town as the carver and knew his family. Thus we were able to put together the pieces of this puzzle. It appears that the carver is reminiscing about the old country. Trapping wild doves with large nets is a big event in the Pyrenean mountain passes. His mother, Philopina, is a gypsy from Lacotea. "Big teeth" might refer to her. Another tree, further down the mountain, tells us more about the *houchu phuina* (fine dove) and provides further toponyms. The additional information permitted us to pinpoint the exact location of the carver's original farmstead and the mother who, according to the visitors, was still alive in the summer of 1989.

Names and dates allow us to trace the carvers' regional backgrounds, their movements about the various mountain ranges of Nevada and contiguous states, and the length of time each herder was employed in the sheep business. Also, the names and dates tell us precisely in which years sheep were grazed in each mountain range and canyon as well as identifying the roads and trails they followed. The data might also be helpful in estimating the total number of sheep being grazed (most herds numbered an average of 1,000 to 1,500 ewes).

Human Figures

The great majority of the herders suffered from loneliness and longed for human companionship; that is why a great number of the carvings are figures of

men and women. Some of the males are possibly self-portraits. The females often appear nude, and they may represent male fantasies. The standard male figure is burly and squat with a round belly; he is usually smoking, often a pipe, and wearing a hat or some other headgear. These figures are standing, with feet wide apart, or walking. The hands, often out of proportion to the rest of the body, are commonly shown resting on either side of the hips. Sometimes the arms are shown positioned somewhere in the air, twisted, in a manner that recalls Picasso.

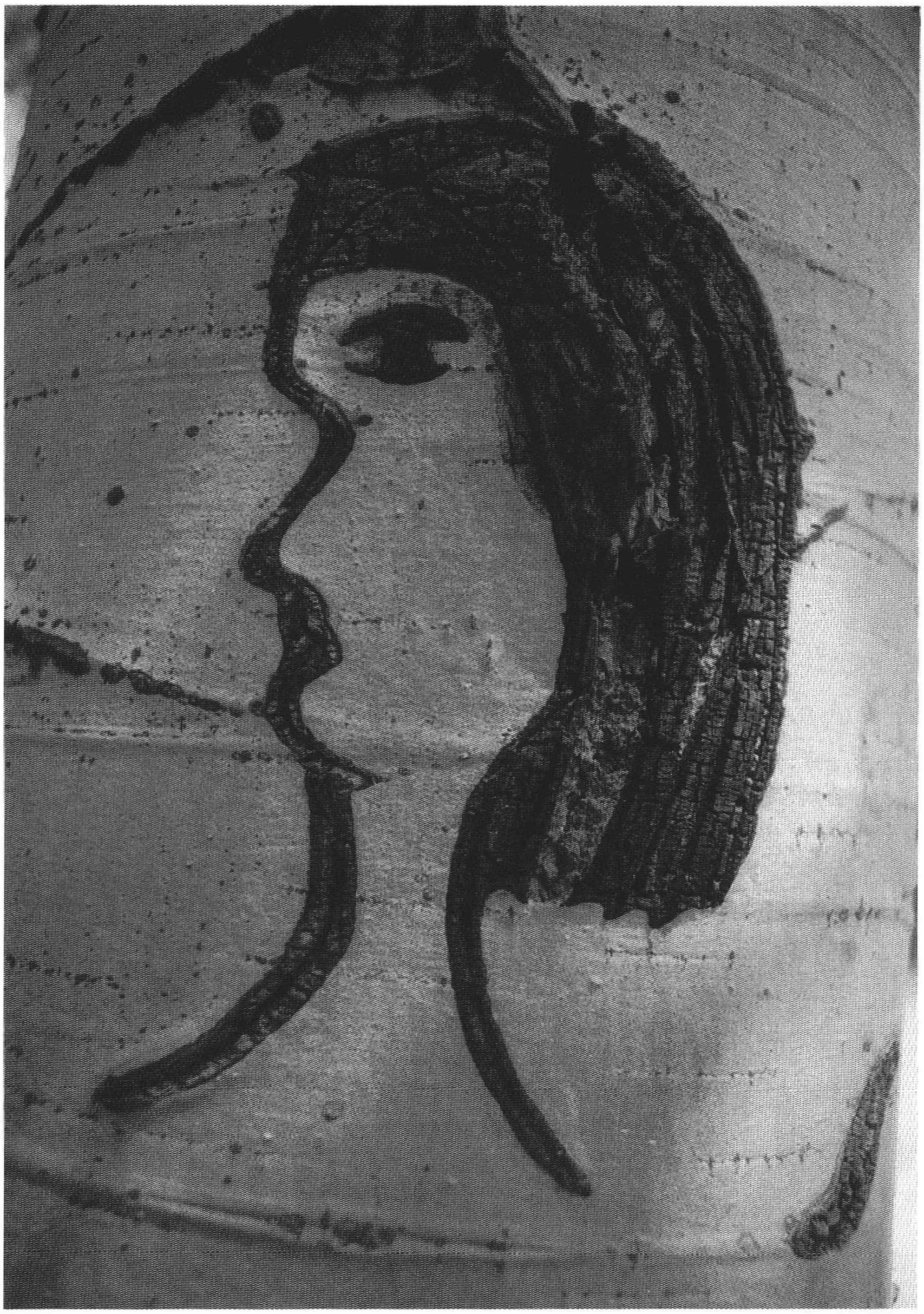
The figures that appear to be self-portraits often depict a man wearing baggy pants and coat, holding a *makila* (sheepherder's staff) in one hand and walking. Sometimes there is a draft animal (rarely a dog) next to him. The carved males are frequently seen performing some task or activity. One dated 1915 shows a man sitting on a chair and reading a book. Others may be facing another human figure, shaking hands, fighting, fishing, or leading a draft animal. Many carvings show a male involved with a female; there is a variety of situations and positions. Even in sexual scenes the male is often characterized smoking. To the carver of a male figure, the smoke and the penis were important details that served to distinguish men from women. A carver is not allowed a second chance in this activity, and, while fine-tuning the drawing is difficult, erasing a mistake is out of the question.[16]

Females, Sex, and Courtship

Women were the favorite subject of Basque carvers. The herders' preferred type of female is represented with ample curves. When men and women are shown engaged in sexual activity, frequently the woman is larger. These characteristics constitute a style that was often imitated, elaborated, and consolidated by individual sheepherders.

In some carvings women are dressed elegantly in traditional Basque skirts and *moinu* (tuft) hairdos. Many nudes have high heels. One carving shows a very detailed female figure, which a second herder completed by carving a baby (or a lamb?) in the abdomen area and adding eyelashes. Another tree in a nearby canyon shows a large nude in high heels holding a baby in the nursing position. Above Lake Tahoe, there is a nude female facing a priest (much smaller in size and dressed in liturgical vestments) who is holding/reading a book. In the Basque Country, women go to church to be purified after childbirth, and the carving may represent such a rite. On the other hand, the scene may instead be a satirical comment on the clergy.

The herder's want of female companionship is expressed bluntly in the carvings, and the following statement is typical: "I have plenty of pasture for the sheep, I have plenty of supplies, but I lack a woman." Another proclaims, "Everyone knows the sheepherder has only one problem, the woman; that alone worries him." The sheepherder tried to carve the best-looking woman he



Carving of a woman by an unknown artist, located in the Wheeler Peak area, White Pine County, Nevada. (*Jose Mallea-Olaetxe*)

could, and then he would often add a caption such as "What a cutie! She is OK to spend the night with." The carving may represent a desire to be involved with such a woman.

There is an abundance of carvings in which women appear primarily as sexual

objects. Like the Paleolithic terracotta figurines, a number of the carved females have neither heads nor feet—just a pronounced bust, the torso, and the legs. While there may be a temptation to label the herders as chauvinists, the erotic creations of these young Basques can be better viewed as an outlet for sexual fantasies.[17] The activity was simply an expression of their longing for female companionship. And their isolation allowed them total artistic freedom. The one-dimensional erotically charged carvings are sometimes reminiscent of Picasso's style, and Jack Muldoon, among others, has referred to the Basque herders as Mountain Picassos.[18] This behavior by Basques contrasts with that of the Hispanic herders in New Mexico who carved few nudes and still fewer sexual figures.[19] It will be interesting to compare the general tone of sexual explicitness found in Nevada with that in other states, such as Idaho.

Not all the sexually candid carvings can be attributed to sexual drive, however. A few are the result of a competitive game among the herders themselves. They strove to out-do each other in carving the most voluptuous-looking woman, the most explicit sex act, or the most outlandish statement. This is the reason why carvers vied for certain trees, which became their billboards in the forest. Frequently, each carver would have his own particular territory in the grove for his personal permanent art exhibit. With so many trees around it might be assumed that boundaries would be honored, but often they were not. Some spots, such as at crossroads, the bank of a stream, or a sheep camp, were choice locations, and many wanted to carve the same few strategically located trees until they were all carved out. A few miles south of Reno, one carver complained, "*No ai sitio*" (There is no room). Yet there were hundreds of aspens nearby.

Personal and regional recognition also appear to be part of the rivalry. Year after year the sheepherders who trekked through these groves read the messages and appreciated or scorned the talent of the earlier herders. They took pride in the artistry of carvers whom they recognized as compatriots in the Old Country. A number of the pictures and statements were inspired by existing inscriptions that the herders found carved in the grove. Plagiarism existed in these remote mountains, and there are clear cases where herders copied each other. The new carver tried to out-perform his predecessors by adding explicitness to his figure or introducing a new twist in a statement. In one carving, a herder criticizes another: "Melchor you do not know how to draw."

In many inscriptions women are referred to as *putas* (whores, in Spanish), the kind of woman a herder would have met during his infrequent and fleeting visits to town. In the Silver State, certain carvings echo Nevada life styles: nude women with high heels and garters, brothel rituals, drinking. References to gaming or gambling are extremely rare. A common carving shows a plump naked woman with the caption: "Hurrah for the whores." One herder who must have had a good night in town (or was dreaming about it) carved, "Today August 20, 1966 is the day of the whores. Hurray for the whores of America."

Three hundred and fifty miles away in Elko County, an identical carving contains an additional statement: "Long live the whores of Biscay as well." I am told that some herders did not go to town for years; for many, a visit to the distant town meant a visit to the brothel. The news of such a journey spread quickly among the herders of the area. Sometimes those forced to remain behind recorded the departure, as in "J.E. is going . . . to screw, he will not be sorry, 1926." Many carvings whose topic dealt with a night in a brothel focused on the mechanical aspects of intercourse; the images on trees appear to reflect the herder's close contact with the animals around him.

Herders also recorded their unexpected encounters with hikers, especially females. On a popular hiking trail near Reno, one carver says, "Hurrah for the blonds who pass through here." Other carvings are explicitly sexual in their verbal descriptions of women.

Girls sometimes visited the herders in the mountains, and carvings record those encounters: "Honey (spelled *jani*) today we are going to screw here; tomorrow will be another day." One herder recorded his impression upon meeting a woman on the mountain: "The blond girl from Verdi brought Linney over; as far as I am concerned, she is a knock-out." Under the figure of a nude woman someone else claimed, "This is where I 'got' her; ask her (if you do not believe me)." Some years later, a Navarrese herder saw this carving and added underneath, "I ask her but she does not answer." Two hundred miles away in Humboldt County, a sheepherder declared, "Women and wine both are good." On the other side of the tree another herder responded, "Yes, but they are hard on your pocket." This sort of exchange is not unusual.

The aspen carvings also indicate that a few herders had semi-steady girlfriends in town. One carving exhibits a hefty-looking woman with a Spanish-English caption: *Una americana es fine for me culito tumach es vaquera me ama bastante* (An American girl is fine for me, too much "bottom," she is a cowgirl, she loves me enough). Those involved in more serious relationships carved the names of their girlfriends numerous times. Sometimes important decisions were recorded on trees. *No mas sierras* (No more mountains) was typical. Another carved, "I am not coming back here, except to fish, maybe." Ten years later, this particular herder did return to fish with his wife and their son, and on a nearby tree they all carved their names and the date.

Although customs are rapidly changing in the Basque Country, the public discussion of sexual matters, not to mention erotic carvings, was strongly discouraged. Basques talk about sex when among friends, and the frankness of Basque vocabulary is well known. But expressing these ideas graphically, or in writing, is a different matter. In America, many herders felt liberated from former taboos, and their freedom of expression is apparent in the tree carvings.

Not all the messages and pictures regarding women are sexual in content. Courting in the Basque Country is a more formal affair than in America, and it

is not surprising that many carvings refer to girlfriends left behind. The standard message is *Viva mi novia* (Hurray for my fiancée), by which the herder professed his devotion to her. Some added more detailed descriptions of the women. The following example is written in a mixture of Spanish and Basque: *Mi linda pocholita se llama Margarita es linda pero es marikita* (My cute little plump girl is called Margarita, she is cute but too effeminate). Another herder recorded his long-distance love affair on dozens of trees in several canyons of Humboldt County:

1959, July 8 Long live my fiancée.

1959, July 21 Hurrah for my girlfriend A. (On another tree dated 1959 the carver provided explicit details as to why she loved him.)

1960, July 8 I am sad. My girlfriend is not writing. It is my own fault because I am jealous and a bastard.

1960, July 25 My fiancée is in love with a Galician and she has stood me up.[20]

1960 July 30 A. no longer writes.

How sad for a man when the woman deceives him. (No date is indicated.)

1960, August 24 Today my girlfriend was very cheerful.

Interpersonal Relationships among Herders

Little has been written about the relationships among the herders themselves. The literature emphasizes the isolation of the herder, and we have been led to believe that, except for the weekly visits of the camp-tender, the herder had no contact with any human during the summer and early fall months of sheep-herding activity. However, the aspen carvings indicate that this was not always the case.

The herder's isolation had its interruptions. In the Jarbidge area (Elko County), some of the Elisson and Goicoechea herders regularly visited each other. In the Bilk Range (Humboldt County), herders working for different outfits shared a creek for their water, and their sheep camps were not too far apart. Those who camped near a popular creek or in the Sierra around Lake Tahoe saw fishermen and weekend hikers. In the fall, deer hunters sometimes tried to get information from herders regarding game. Some of the herders interviewed stated that they eagerly sought out such encounters, while others avoided them. It is also true that some herders worked in less isolated areas than others.

There are carvings that indicate the existence of a community, *lato sensu*, of sheepherders. The camp-tender brought outside news from or about other

countrymen in the area. Herders also wrote letters to each other, because a significant number of the sheepherders worked for more than one outfit. On rare occasions they took the time to pay visits, usually in the winter when the herders were laid off. The Boise-Winnemucca highway was a well-traveled road for Basques. The Basque hotels, camp-tenders, and aspen carvings served as the sheepherder's communication grapevine. A number of the carvings must be understood within this context. There are quite a few carvings written for others to read and comment on, such as inscriptions relating to Paulino Uzcudun (the Basque heavyweight champion), the European wars, the launching of the first Russian missiles, Fidel Castro, and Nixon's overture to the Chinese. It is of interest that no reference to the Spanish civil war of 1936–39 has been found, although there are some noncomplimentary ones regarding General Francisco Franco.

At the same time, the sheepherders remained an isolated group of individuals in the West. They failed to unite behind a common cause and often drifted into bands, forming groupings according to linguistic and regional backgrounds. There were also subgroups of herders that coalesced according to locale in the Basque Country. Good examples are herders from the towns of Arnegy, Banka, Aldude, Lesaka, and Elizondo, which were heavily represented in the sheep industry.

Ethnic Pride and Linguistic Divisions

Nostalgic sentiment about the homeland and a common ethnic awareness can be deduced from the choice of words used in carvings, such as *Euskaldun/ Eskualdun, Basco* or *vasco, Bask,* and *Euskotarra*. Some herders expressed their ideas forcefully, and carved clear political statements. The favored were *Gora Euskadi* (Long live independent Basque Country), *Biba Eskual Herria* (Long live the Basque Country) and Long live ETA (Euskdita Askatasuna), an armed pro-independence Basque guerilla group whose name means independent Basque country and freedom. The French Basques refrained from political statements. Their favorite patriotic expressions were *Biba eskualdun arzainak* (Long live the Basque sheepherders who speak the language) and *Vive la France*. Biscayan and other pro-independence herders did not react to the pro-French statements as much as to the pro-Spanish ones. Near Reno, someone proclaimed, "Long live Spain," and underneath someone else carved "That guy up there is a s.o.b." There are a number of *Viva España* (Long live Spain), *Viva Navarra* (Long live Navarre), and *Aupa Vizcaya* (Long Live Biscay) statements. The most common one, however, is *Biba ni* (Hurrah for me).

A number of anti-Basque carvings have also been found in various parts of the Sierra. Frank Rodriguez, born in Galicia (northwest Spain) in 1894, left considerable evidence of his ill-disposition towards the Basques, especially the Biscay-

ans. He carved several donkey heads with the caption "A Biscayan." In another mountain range, he stated, "The pigs, the Basques and the chickens are stingy animals, they eat shit." Someone else reacted on the next aspen: "He is worse because he masturbates himself in order to save money." Rodriguez carved a variety of statements, flowers, and animals, and his wrath spared no one, not even his boss. His favorite topic was sex. He also left an incredible statement: "Long live the Depression of 1932."

Based on the aspen carvings, the linguistic differences among Basques appear to have been the strongest cause for internal divisions. While Basque-speaking Navarrese considered themselves Basques from Navarre, some of the central and southern Navarrese (who spoke only Spanish) saw themselves as Navarros as opposed to Bascos. One carving on the Nevada-California border, translated as literally as possible, serves as an example of this sentiment: "The Basques are ass kissers, they think of themselves as very smart but we the Navarros screw them. . . ."

There is also evidence of friction between Biscayans and French Basques, but less between these French and the Basque Navarrese who spoke similar dialects. Samples that address these grievances have been collected from three different national forest areas and two states. On one aspen, a carver wrote, *De Francia salen los gabachos, unos a filar tigeras* [sic], *otros a capar los machos*. This is a rather humorous verse: "From France come the *gabachos,*[21] some to sharpen scissors and others to castrate the he-mules." This same carver was considerably less polite on a nearby tree: "Frenchman, pimp, wart sucker, s.o.b. suckers." In another area, a Biscayan wrote, "Screw the bosses from France. This year I am switching outfits. Long live Spain and the sheepherders." This was a herder who normally hailed Biscay, never Spain, but in this case he decided that Spain carried a bigger stick.

Dissension between camp-tender and herders was common. The latter depended considerably on the former for food and drink. In the carvings, the herder often appears as the victim. The bolder ones did not hesitate to provide names: "M. is lazy, he is no good as a camp-tender, he abuses his herders . . . A.Y." In this particular case, the camp-tender's name is Basque and so is the carver's, and both were Basque Navarrese, indicating that conflicts were not necessarily conditioned by regionalism or dialectical differences. Hundreds of miles away, someone else proclaimed, "M.I. 1924 The camp-tenders of yesteryear were bandits, they did not bring firewood for the following year and I was fucked up." One inscription left an account of a real-life drama, commending a particular camp-tender: "If it had not been for Valerio, Antonio would have been eaten by worms . . . he would have died of hunger." While we do not know who carved this, "Valerio the rattlesnake" (*Valerio El cascabel*) did carve a few aspens of his own in the same grove. He claimed to be a camp-tender.

Much of the bickering evidenced in carvings was in good jest; it gave herders

something to joke about and kept the aspen "literature" interesting. A good example, written in succession on the same tree by three different sheepherders (one of them a French Basque who tried to write in Spanish), follows:

Todos los franceses son trampas (All Frenchmen are sneaky)

Los espagnoles no vales berga (The Spaniards are not worth a dick)

Y los franceses cornudos (And the Frenchmen [are] cuckolds)

Clearly, the arborglyphs provide access to a better understanding of the Basques and of the sheep industry in Nevada. Speaking directly for the sheepherders, without intermediaries, the aspen carvings are a cultural, historical, and artistic resource that warrants further research. While we may be unaccustomed to this unusual form of historical document, the data are obtainable by visiting the aspen groves. The carvings are a perishable resource, however, and recording should be pursued while the trees are still standing.

Notes

[1]There are many studies of Basques in the West. For a general treatment of the Basques in the United States, see William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao, *Amerikanuak. Basques in the New World* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975). A persuasive spokesman for the Basque sheepherders is Nevada's Robert Laxalt. See his *Sweet Promised Land* (New York: Harper, 1957).

[2]The carving phenomenon represents a curious anomaly within the larger context of Basque history. Basque literature has traditionally been oral and, as a result, there is a chronic lack of written documentation, especially in the Basque language. However, in the American West, simple, uneducated peasants made carved documents.

[3]Richard Lane, "Basque Tree Carvings," *Northeastern Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 1:3 (1971), 1–7.

[4]Frances Wallace and Hans Reiss, "Basquos," The Basque Studies Program *Newsletter*, no. 5 (University of Nevada, Reno, 1971), 3–5; Phillip I. Earl, "Basque Folk Art in Nevada: Aspen Tree Carvings are Called Mountain Picassos," *Las Vegas Sun* (14 November 1982).

[5]"Adios California," The Basque Studies Program *Newsletter*, no. 19 (University of Nevada, Reno, 1978), 3–5; "Aspen Art and the Sheep Industry in Nevada and Adjoining Counties," *Nevada County Historical Society Bulletin* 33:4 (October 1979), "The Basque and Their Carvings," *Sierra Heritage* (Auburn, Calif.) (June 1982), 18–21.

[6]Archaeologists in the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in California and Nevada have gathered information and taken photographs of aspen carvings in their districts. Special mention must be given to archaeologist Arnie Turner, Toiyabe National Forest Service, of Sparks; Roberta McGonagle, a BLM archaeologist in Nevada's Battle Mountain; and USFS archaeologist Polly Hammer and her assistants in the delta area of Colorado.

[7]The University of Nevada, Reno, contributed matching monies for these projects.

[8]John Bakeless, *Daniel Boone* (New York: W. Morrow and Company, 1939).

[9]John M. Slater, *El Morro. Inscription Rock* (Los Angeles: The Plantin Press, 1961), 61, 98. Several Basque travelers in the eighteenth century such as Uribarri and Elizacoechea imitated Oñate (*ibid.*, 60, 62, 69, 99, 113).

[10]Aspen carvings are made by knife incisions on the bark of the trees. Sheepherders say that at first they tended to cut too deeply into the bark. The result was an unsightly scar, which is the reason why many carvings cannot be read. A fine incision, which barely reaches into the cambium, remains clear and produces the best impression. In a few years the incision scars over, turning rich black or whitish gray, depending on the color of the bark.

[11]The name Vicondoa denotes Navarrese origin. His carving was read in 1959 by Jess Lopategi of Elko, who herded sheep in that area for several years.

[12]Located nearby is another carving consisting of a cross and E (or P), followed by 1830, the oldest date found. The cross was frequently carved by herders, so it appears that this is the work of a Basque. However, the date, clearly readable, presents an obvious problem. Can either the tree or the carving be that old? The date may refer to the birth date of the carver.

[13]The other murdered herders were Jean Baptiste Lasaga (Laxague) and Bertrand Indiano; the fourth man was Harry Cambron. Gratien Laxague herded sheep and carved in the 1920s and 1930s in Summit Lake, Nevada, and near Madeline, California. He was a relative of Jean Baptiste. The incident of 1911 is still debated. One writer cites abuse of Indian women by Basques as a motive for the killings (see Dayton O. Hyde, *The Last Free Man: The True Story behind the Massacre of Shoshone Mike and His Band of Indians in 1911* [New York: Dial Press, 1973], 175). According to Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society, the bullets found in the bodies did not match the Indians' guns. He believes that the killers were probably cattlemen from Surprise Valley, California (personal communications; declarations aired on KOLO-TV Channel 8 [Reno, Nevada] in February 1991).

[14]For example, in the Mahogany Creek area, east of the Black Rock Desert, there are two carvings that address the deaths of two herders.

[15]The word *año* is Spanish for "year," but herders often spelled it *ano*, which means "anus."

[16]It seems to me that many of the so-called fantasy forms writers talk about are simply carving mistakes. Perhaps the herder tried to correct it, rendering it even more fantasy-like. The scarring of the tree does the rest.

[17]John C. Altrocchi (Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Nevada School of Medicine) was shown the material in question. His comment was that if we did not find such carvings, we might have to worry (personal communication).

[18]"The Art of Boredom," *International Arts and Crafts*, no. 1, 15–18.

[19]James deKorne, *Aspen Art in the New Mexico Highlands* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1970), 11.

[20]In the 1950s and 1960s, many people immigrated to the Basque Country from different parts of Spain, including Galicia in northwest Spain.

[21]*Gabacho* is a derogatory term applied to the non-Basque French.

PORTUGUESE PIONEERS IN EARLY NEVADA

Donald Warrin

The experience of the Portuguese in the American West was significantly different from that of Portuguese immigrants on the East Coast. Social historians have typically described the latter as unambitious and disinterested in participation in such aspects of the general community as education, acquiring citizenship, and politics.[1] Living mostly in ethnic enclaves in the cities of New England, their population density encouraged them to maintain a traditional and static organization much like that of their indigenous village structure. Their labor in the factories offered little to challenge this custom. Maintenance of their language and religious practices, as well as considerable discrimination, only served to exacerbate their isolation. On the other hand, in the West, and particularly in Nevada, the industriousness of the Portuguese immigrants, liberated from traditional sociocultural constraints, allowed them to better themselves considerably.

Albin J. Cofone has made a similar observation concerning Italian immigrants living in ethnic enclaves in the East as opposed to those in Nevada. The former had a reputation for being clannish and removed from the dominant society, "believing themselves helpless to influence any event outside of their own community."[2] In Nevada, however, they discarded much of the old-country value system: "To come to Nevada meant one took his chances alone, or with a few friends, but not with a surrogate village structure from the ancestral land."[3] Cofone suggests that if the American historian Frederick Jackson Turner (1861–1932) had reflected on the Italian population of Nevada he might have gathered more empirical data to support further what has become known as the Turner frontier thesis on the importance of the westward movement in American his-

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tory.[4] Turner saw the advance of American settlement across the continent from east to west as the key to understanding American history. Implicit in Cofone's comment is an appeal to broaden the Turner thesis to embrace ethnic America. An examination of the Portuguese in nineteenth-century Nevada adds strength to this idea and corroborates Wilbur Shepperson's observation contradicting Turner's notion that newly-arrived immigrants were simply followers in the settlement of the West.[5]

The Portuguese came to the United States not in large numbers; but their concentration primarily in three regions of the country has meant that they have had an impact on the history of those areas, namely, New England, Hawaii, and California.[6] As William Trimble points out, the "mining frontier" represented principally a movement from the West Coast inland.[7] Thus the relatively large Portuguese population in California, a few of whom had begun to arrive during the period of Mexican hegemony, was able to participate early in the inland march to the gold- and silver-producing areas of the still unsettled West.

The story of Portuguese immigration to the United States is unique. It is not, as one might think, the story of migration from Iberian Portugal, for that was directed generally toward South America. During the nineteenth century the bulk of Portuguese immigration to the United States originated in Portugal's Atlantic islands—most of it from the nine islands of the Azores and the rest from Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands.

The Azores, lying strategically in the central North Atlantic, have serviced long-distance shipping since the earliest days of Iberian exploration in the fifteenth century. By the seventeenth century, the islands, initially settled by Flemish colonists as well as Portuguese, had become a rich agricultural region, exporting wheat and barley to the continent, later oranges to England, and wine to the English colonies and to Europe.[8] By the mid-nineteenth century, however, agricultural pests, economic competition, volcanic activity, and general disinterest on the part of Lisbon had reduced the islands to a state of relative poverty.

Contrary to what is generally imagined, the fishing industry was not highly developed in the islands. Nevertheless, lying as they did in the center of the transatlantic trade routes, the Azores were a convenient manpower source for codfishers on their way to the Grand Banks and, more important and frequent, for passing ships of the New England whaling fleet. These ships could replenish their crews with young men eager to escape a bleak future which was likely to include several years as a military conscript. By the mid-nineteenth century, Azorians constituted a major component of American whaling crews, representing more than half the seamen on many ships.[9] Still others found whaling captains willing to accept a stowaway to be dropped off in New England in exchange for remuneration.

For Turner's westward-moving pioneers the huge North American continent was the frontier or series of frontiers. For the Azorian whaler—with the mys-

tique of whaling deeply imbedded in the folklore of the islands—the frontier was the globe itself. Azorians settled in early-nineteenth-century communities in such far-flung places as Australia, Tasmania, Alaska, Hawaii, and Mexican California.[10] Situated on the American whaling vessels, along with other Portuguese islanders from the Cape Verdes and some from Madeira, the Azorians were strategically placed at the time of the California gold rush. In the 1850s and 1860s many left their ships and made their way into the newly discovered California gold fields and on to the mining areas of the Great Basin.

Portuguese immigration to Nevada began early. The population from Portugal at the time of the United States census of 1870 was 149, compared to 15 Spanish, 5 Greeks, 199 Italians, and 414 French.[11] The number never increased substantially, however, for the islands that supplied this immigration numbered their own total population in the tens of thousands at most.[12] In fact, almost all of the Portuguese who came early to Nevada were from the western islands of the Azorian archipelago—Pico, São Jorge, Faial, Flores, and tiny Corvo—with those from Flores predominating. Education for the typical Azorian in the nineteenth century consisted at best of a few years of elementary school. Scant few went on to seminary studies or to preparatory school and university on the continent. Portuguese literacy rates were, in fact, among the lowest of all immigrant groups entering the United States. The typical Azorian immigrant in the West had, nonetheless, an entrepreneurial spirit that often led him (and at times her) to operate a bar, restaurant, barbershop, or grocery store; to manage a farm or ranch; or to choose a semi-independent occupation such as teamster.

The state census of 1875 shows 143 Portuguese living in Storey County.[13] Most of the 120 males were engaged in mining. Of the 23 women, all but 2 were married to Portuguese men. As Shepperson notes with regard to other foreign nationals, the Portuguese married predominantly within their ethnic group.[14] When they did marry outside, it was almost always to other Catholics, usually Irish and sometimes Mexicans.

The lack of interest in naturalization noticed among the Portuguese in the East did not extend to those in Nevada. The Nevada experience differs significantly. More than one-half of the Portuguese men in Nevada in 1875 had become naturalized citizens. In fact, in the previous year fifty-seven Portuguese were naturalized in Storey County, an amazing number considering that it represents 40 percent of the official state census count of 1875 for the county.[15] However, only a few of the names of those naturalized in 1874 appear in the state census the following year, which indicates either a high degree of mobility of the Portuguese on the Comstock or a serious undercount in the enumeration. On the other hand, almost one-quarter of the Portuguese males in 1875 were accompanied by their spouses, which indicates a degree of stability in the community.

Residents on the Comstock were not unfamiliar with Portuguese ethnicity, as can be seen from an episode related by the San Francisco newspaperman John Taylor Waldorf. On the night of July 11, 1876, the house of Manuel Jassie burned

to the ground. Jassie's problems were compounded by the fact that his insurance policy had lapsed the previous month.[16] Into this unhappy situation wandered young Waldorf the next morning. As he reminisced much later,

> I wasn't more than ten years of age when I got my first peep into the barrel of a revolver. Behind the artillery—it looked like a cannon to me—was a somewhat excitable gentleman from the Azores.
>
> There had been a fire the night before, and, kid-like, I was poking around among the remains of what had been a second-class shanty looking for something to play with. I surely didn't want to play with the owner. He didn't want to play, either. He borrowed the speed of one of his bullfighting ancestors and came at me. As he closed in, he obligingly lifted the gun so that I could see into it, uncoiled a string of Portuguese oaths, and topped it off with as vigorous an invitation to "Get out!" as I ever heard. I got.[17]

The Portuguese in the United States suffered discrimination not dissimilar to that directed toward other southern Europeans at the time, but more severe in New England than in the West. They were commonly labeled Portugee (pronounced portagee), a name which at times found its way into the geographical nomenclature, such as Portugee Lane in Stillwater, Nevada.[18] In addition, the existence of Afro-Portuguese immigrants from the Cape Verde Islands and a supposed Moorish influence in the Azores led to the term *black Portugee* being applied by the prejudiced to Portuguese immigrants in general.[19] Prejudice was certainly a factor in the social immobility of the Portuguese in New England, but there is no evidence that it limited the behavior of Portuguese immigrants in Nevada.[20] Rather, illiteracy and limited English-language ability were the principal factors restricting their choices of occupation.

In his memoir of life on the Comstock, Harry Gorham recalls the attitude of a family friend, the Irishman Denis McCarty, concerning the local Portuguese:

> A Portuguese woman next door had an artistic aspiration, bought a piano and started, in middle life, to learn to play.
>
> All day long we could hear this "Tum te tum TUM TE TUM" and as Denis brought in the wood he muttered his objections to the noise.
>
> "But Denis," my mother said, "she has a right to play the piano, you know."
>
> "Play the pian-e," said Denis, with contempt (he disliked Portuguese anyway), "Play the pian-e, is it, well all I can hear is Pur-te-g PORT—te—g—." He was a grand old man.[21]

As both Shepperson and Cofone note, the Nevada immigrants tended to drift away from or to reject outright their religious backgrounds.[22] Thus, in spite of their Catholic origins many Portuguese joined organizations with Protestant roots such as the Masons and the Odd Fellows. As a group on the Comstock they generally remained anonymous; unlike several other nationalities, they appear not to have participated as a body in public events. Rather, they probably formed part of the activities of organizations to which many of them belonged, such as the miners' unions and the fraternal societies mentioned above. In Gold

Hill, where the majority resided, there existed no Portuguese ethnic enclave, as they lived in several parts of town.[23]

One Azorian miner had a bit of good fortune. Joseph King had become a friend of C. C. Stephenson. According to family accounts and county records, when Stephenson moved to Carson to assume the governorship in 1887, he deeded his substantial Gold Hill residence to King for the sum of $5.00.[24]

Of the Portuguese women little is known. Since American women did not yet have the right to vote, these immigrant women did not even go through the naturalization process. One woman, T. Enos, is listed in the 1875 census as being a miner. Eliza Lawson, born at sea to a Portuguese father and an Irish mother, published on December 2, 1866, an irate notice in the *Territorial Enterprise:* She wanted readers to know that the lessee of her Franco-American restaurant in Virginia City, having fallen far behind in rent, and "besides using most indecent and abusive language," had had the nerve to pay her finally in "greenbacks" (in the West, paper money was traded at a significant discount, and gold was the preferred currency). Moving to Pioche a few years later, Mrs. Lawson operated a slaughter house and butcher shop there until she was murdered in 1894.[25] These women were the exceptions, however. The vast majority of females either were children living at home or were married housekeepers. Life was particularly difficult for women who married and went to live in outlying areas. Rural Nevada was especially a man's world. The loneliness and frustration of being a woman in this environment is plaintively evoked in these simple verses taken from a poem by Lottie Gomes, the American wife of the Azorian John A. Gomes of Golconda:

Behold the barbarian man,
Loving the plains as a strong man can,
No women's shops to distress his mind,
All things to him are dear and kind,
No pretty church, with its open door,
Cushioned pews and velvet floor,
But the doors of Saloons are open wide
And over the sage for miles men ride
To eat, to drink, to live for the day,
Seems to make (some) men happy,
Seems to be (some) men's way.
Music, and flowers, shops, and art,
In their life takes no vital part
But the days are grey
And we miss the things so far away,
And women can never tell
How the desert makes of our life a hell.[26]

From the 1870 and 1875 censuses four Portuguese blacks can be identified; they were all probably from the Cape Verde Islands, off the coast of Senegal. One was T. Marshall, who had a tailor shop on C Street in Virginia City for many

years. Marshall was apparently the only black tailor in the territory up to at least the time of the 1870 census.[27] The others worked as cooks, as blacks often did in this era, in various locations in the state.[28]

Two aspects of the American spirit that Frederick Jackson Turner noted were its pragmatism and its individualism, qualities for which the Portuguese are well known. In the words of a contemporary Portuguese scholar, "Individualism emerges as one of the most outstanding elements in the personality of the Portuguese immigrant, mellowed only by strong family loyalties."[29] Described in another study as "the traditional Portuguese aversion to all forms of external control over the individual," Portuguese individualism evokes comparison with Turner's northern European frontier models.[30] It manifested itself in the occupations they chose and the locations in which they settled. In populated areas such as the Comstock, they displayed a strong predilection for setting up small businesses such as grocery stores, restaurants, or saloons. Even more common was the choice of a barbershop, where the temperate Portuguese could gather without the heavy imbibing of the taverns.[31] For the male Portuguese immigrant, the barbershop became "the hub of his masculine world."[32] By 1870 four Portuguese barbers had established themselves in "hair dressing saloons" in Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Carson City. A decade later there were fifteen in the three cities.

Other significant aspects of Portuguese immigrant culture include what has been called an "almost puritanical ethic of incessant toil," a "preoccupation with saving," and an "almost total abdication of worldly pleasures."[33] Examples in early Nevada are common. In 1891 a young Portuguese was killed in a mill accident in Candelaria. The newspaper reported, "Silva was a man who had succeeded in accumulating some money, and would have quit work at the end of the month to go to a ranch he owned in California. At the time of the accident he had over $300 in his pocket, and it is said he had also in addition to his ranch about $5,000 in the bank." The following month another Portuguese died from pneumonia and $800 was found on his body.[34] As Wilbur Shepperson notes regarding the state's Italian immigrants, "The frugal practices of southern Europe were not lost in restless Nevada."[35]

It was not simple that the immigrants did not entrust their funds to others: An old-country village mentality might lead them, in the absence of a bank, to establish a fiduciary relationship with another individual. Louis Lemaire told a story about an unknown Portuguese miner (whom he disparagingly referred to as a "ragged, dirty, old Portygee") who entered Lemaire's Battle Mountain store at the turn of the century and asked if he could leave some money. The Lemaires often provided this service for ranchers or miners, there being no bank in town. But when the stranger had piled $2,000 on the counter, Lemaire said to him:

> "This is quite a bit of money, pardner. I'd better give you a receipt for it." Glaring fiercely at me, the old coot snapped, "Your name's Lemaire, ain't it?" I nodded. "Well," he

growled, "that's good enough for me!" It wasn't long till the old man had $5,000 cached with us. Then, one day, he came in and drew the whole blasted thing, and we never saw him again! We had money stashed all over the store—in barrels of beans, and brown sugar barrels, and rice barrels. I often wonder if I've found all of it, or if there still might be some sticking around![36]

The Portuguese Atlantic islanders who established themselves in Nevada are perhaps the consummate "restless strangers." Driven by a sense of adventure inherent in a people who count great navigators among their ancestors, by an independent nature impelling them toward individual enterprise, and by an experience almost exclusively agricultural in their native land, they moved quickly during the 1860s and 1870s to settle not only the interior of the state of Nevada but also the arid regions of Oregon and Idaho. As it was with the Italians, the Portuguese felt a deep need to move onto the land, to work it, and to own it. An imperative, or at least a willingness, to replicate the isolation of their island homeland in the vastness of the American desert (as they were to settle the semi-desert of California's Central Valley) further encouraged dispersal into the hinterland.[37]

In the late 1860s a small community of Portuguese began to develop in the area around Grantsville and Ione in Nye County. While most were identified in the census as miners, county assessment records indicate they were occupied simultaneously as teamsters, hostlers, and ranchers. Several were connected with the activities of the Spanish mining entrepreneur, Manuel San Pedro.[38] (San Pedro was from Galicia, a Spanish province to the north of Portugal with close cultural and linguistic connections to that country. San Pedro's native language would have been more comprehensible to the Portuguese than to other Spaniards.)[39]

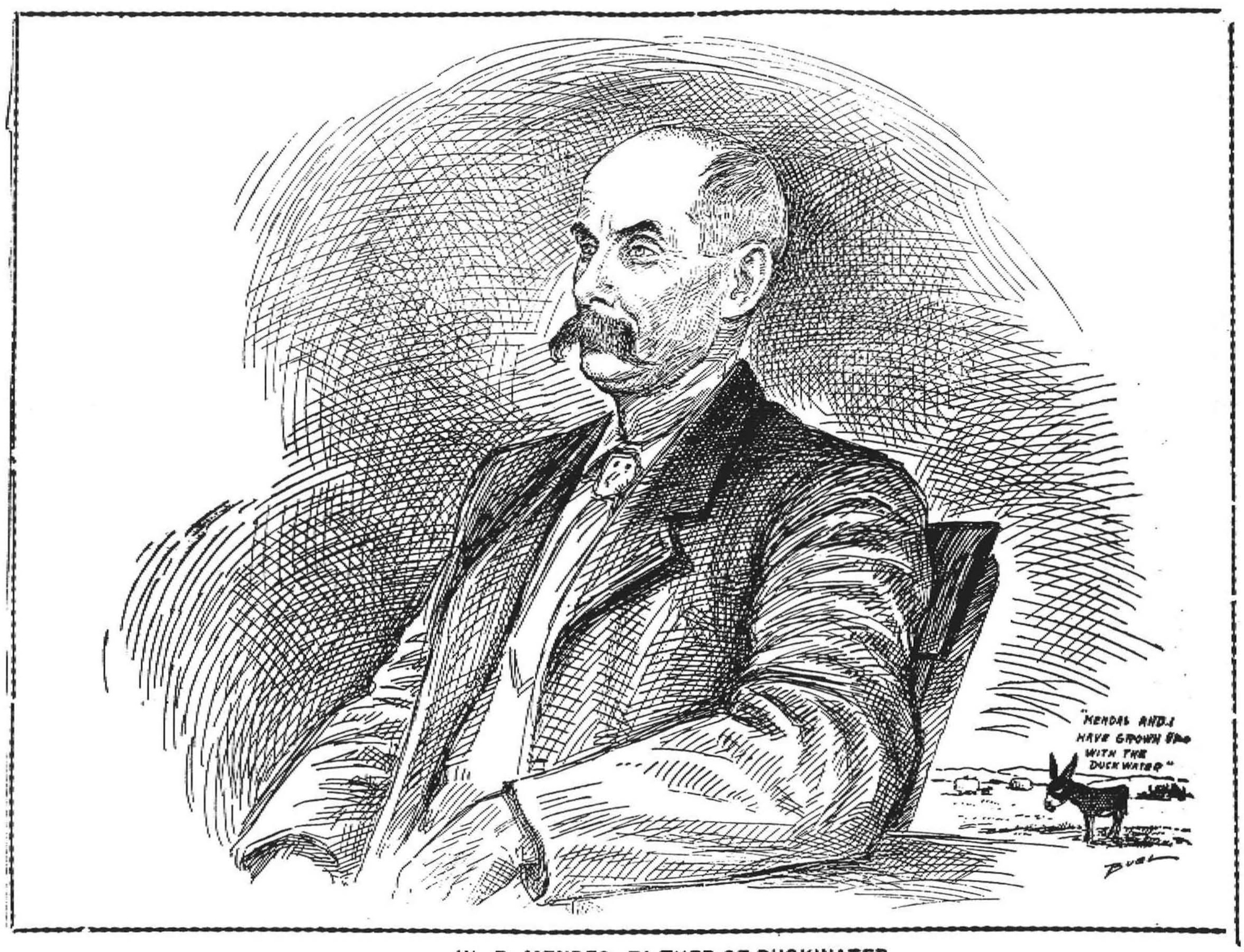
It was not solely precious metals that brought Portuguese into the Silver State. Azorians worked as foremen and straw bosses during construction of the Central Pacific Railroad in the 1860s. Several had settled in Humboldt and Elko counties by the end of the decade and continued to work for the railroad. Most, however, began to buy land and develop cattle ranches. In the 1870s a few Azorians developed ranches along the Humboldt near Iron Point, east of Golconda, where the river briefly turns north. One of them, Manuel Frates, owned a water ditch called the Portugee (or Portuguese) and Spring Slough which ran northwest from the river some four and a half miles to what is now Herrin Slough.[40] The line of the ditch may still be seen on the United States Geological Survey quadrangle map.[41] Some ranchers maintained homes in Golconda. The Joseph brothers, Antone and Manuel, were among the town's first residents, registering their cattle brands in Winnemucca in 1873 and being listed two years later as owners of the Golconda Bridge.[42] Most of these ranchers had families and were married to Portuguese women.

Parsimony no doubt helped one of the original members of the Miners' Union of Gold Hill, Joseph Mendes, make the transition to entrepreneur in Eureka in

the late 1860s. He became the patriarch of Eureka's small Portuguese community, which was overshadowed by the significant Italian population. Mendes owned mines, also saloons, a theatre, and a racetrack in Eureka, and he had a brewery in Taylor. At times he invested with people such as Frank Wittenburg or Hermann Sadler and his brother, future governor Reinhold Sadler. He was also owner for many years of the infamous Tiger Saloon in Eureka.[43]

Sibling cooperation, in which brothers set up homesteads as neighbors was not uncommon on the frontier, as Margaret Sermons Percer notes in her study of Paradise Valley, Nevada.[44] Antone and Manuel Joseph were examples of this frequent practice among the Portuguese in Nevada. The arrival of brothers, sisters, and other relatives often permitted a partial reconstruction of the family unit on the frontier. Parents, if they came at all, might be the last to arrive, to be supported in their retirement by their offspring.

Mendes brought over in succession his three brothers from the island of Flores. George took up prospecting and mining for a while in Eureka and Esmeralda counties, and later in Arizona. Jesse, "one of the pioneer boys of Eu-



W. F. MENDES, FA THER OF DUCKWATER
ONE OF NEVADA'S PIONEERS VI SITS RENO AFTER ABSENCE O F MORE THAN THIRD OF A CEN TURY.

William F. Mendes, one of four brothers from the island of Flores in the Azores who settled and found success in central Nevada. (Reno Evening Gazette, 4 *August 1909*)

reka," worked there as a bartender and saloon operator and then ran a general store in Duckwater.[45] When younger brother William arrived in 1872, he attended school in Eureka for a time, but it was then decided that he should be directed away from the excitement of the town. In 1875 Joseph purchased six hundred acres in Duckwater Valley for $2,000, and William settled there.[46]

Lying some fifty miles south of Eureka in northeastern Nye County, Duckwater boasts a milder climate and has a prodigious supply of water, surging from Big Warm Spring and flowing south as Duckwater Creek. The valley, along with Currant Creek below, was early an important provider of fruit and vegetables to the miners of Eureka, Hamilton, and other mining towns. Its grasses supported large numbers of livestock and provided hay for ranching activities in the surrounding counties. Here William Mendes grew hay, cultivated fruit and vegetables, kept his cattle, and wintered others for Ely ranchers on some thousand acres.[47]

In a 1903 *Atlantic Monthly* article, Frederick Jackson Turner notes the limitations of individualism, stressing the importance of cooperation in Western irrigation.[48] The settlers of Duckwater Valley embraced no such idea. The valley's bountiful water supply from Big Warm Spring became and remained a contentious issue as Mendes and others in the lower valley asserted, and aggressively defended, their prior water rights against the incursion of those above Big Warm Spring who attempted to tap into the spring for irrigation. And as late as 1909, the "father of Duckwater," as the *Reno Evening Gazette* termed William Mendes, found himself in Reno fighting J. C. Tognoni and others who wished to share the bounty of Duckwater Creek.[49]

Mining and working on the railroad were two modes of employment for the Portuguese immigrant in the early years in Nevada. Another was sheepherding. Most Portuguese who arrived in the West had little or no prior experience with sheep. The limited amount of land in the Azores permitted neither the large flocks common to Nevada nor the transhumance that characterized the western sheep industry. But like the Basques, who usually had their initial introduction to sheepherding after immigrating, the Portuguese, too, became identified with this occupation.[50]

Looking back on his experience in the sheep industry in California and Nevada, the Englishman William Shepherd remarks, "In choosing sheepherders, the best will be found among the Mexicans, Basques, or Portuguese. These two latter do not, as a rule, take service except with their own people; their aim is ultimately to possess a share in the herds, and to rise to the position of owners."[51] The Portuguese who came to Nevada and herded sheep, as Shepherd observes, took their pay in the animals they watched over in the hope of one day owning their own flocks. Elko, Humboldt, and Lander counties were the center of these activities.

An example of the upwardly mobile sheepherder is Frank Martin, from the island of Flores in the Azores. Martin's passage in 1873 was paid by an Azorian

sheepman named Pimentel who employed him in Lander County as a sheepherder. Martin paid off his passage and by 1884 had his own band of sheep in Paradise Valley. Subsequently he purchased a ranch on the Reese River near Lewis, then a hotel and other properties in Battle Mountain. Martin finally settled on a ranch in Sparks previously owned by Reno businessman John Jacob Becker. There he first raised Percheron horses, and later Holstein cattle and high-grade sheep, in some relationship with the University of Nevada Agricultural Experiment Station.[52] Martin attended the Pan-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, after which he installed the first milking machine in the Reno area and built the first silo.[53]

Golconda, in Humboldt County, was the preferred point of debarkation for newly arrived Portuguese coming to Nevada by railroad. By the turn of the century they were usually making their way first to the general store of the Azorian John A. Gomes, boarding there for a time in the bunkhouse in the rear, learning some English in lessons from Gomes, and then heading for employment with a sheep or cattle outfit or going to work in one of Gomes's mines.[54]

Portuguese often were involved in transportation. Work as a teamster offered the poorly educated Azorian an outlet for his independent nature. Other Portuguese were stage drivers and at times stage owners. Frank Mattos operated

General store and 1912 Cadillac belonging to John A. Gomes in Golconda, c. 1912 (*John M. Gomes*)

the Battle Mountain and Lewis Stage Line in the early 1880s, and his brother Joe was the proprietor of the Nevada Stage Line that connected Taylor, Ely, and Eureka in the latter part of the decade.[55]

As in the example of sheepherding, the immigrant experience often pushed individuals into occupations in which they had no previous experience. A network of old-country contacts would then continue to provide opportunities for relatives or friends from the home village to emigrate and learn the new occupation. For several decades in the first years of the century there existed a thriving tamale business in Reno, run by Azorians from the island of São Jorge.[56] Undoubtedly—the Portuguese diet being quite distinct from that of Mexico—these men had their first experience with tamales after they came to the West.

A new surge in precious metal mining began after the turn of the century, centered in Nye and Esmeralda counties. The camp of Berlin, close to Grantsville, attracted a number of Portuguese. Berlin was a one-mine company town. It had not been easy for the company to keep workers at the remote location. Although a strike in May 1907 had caused management to increase wages by a third, it was still very difficult to hire and retain English-speaking miners, as the superintendent complained at the time.[57]

On March 7, 1908, a *Tonopah Daily Sun* headline announced, "Race War in Berlin Is Averted." The story continued:

> . . . the company have hired foreigners almost exclusively. Portuguese, Italians, and Basques have all been employed, the Portuguese predominating of late. The company have been importing Basques and discharging the Portuguese, who resented the arrival of the newcomers and the feeling became so strong that violence was feared.

The *Sun* suggested that the Portuguese had given a thrashing to the mine foreman and threatened the superintendent, and thus the sheriff was called, who, incidentally, made the long journey from Tonopah with his deputies by automobile—a sight for the isolated families of the Berlin encampment. The paper concluded by stating that twenty-seven men were heavily fined and ordered out of camp, "while the remainder were kept in custody."

Firmin Bruner, a Basque who was present at the time as a young child, remembers the incident differently. According to him, the fight was over preferential treatment being given to the Portuguese miners by the foreman, a Mr. Gomez, who was of the same nationality. Bruner remembers his uncle Shorty being implicated in the beating of the foreman and then having to spend some days in chains at the camp. "The deputies stayed around a few days and got things simmered down. They fined Uncle Shorty $100, which was a goodly sum in those days, and recommended that Mr. Gomez be relieved of his position, which was done."[58] In spite of the disparity between the two accounts, it seems that the importance of the Portuguese at the Berlin mine had diminished.

The boom in Goldfield in 1907 made that town the most important in Nevada

for a short period, and it became the stage for a showdown between the mine owners on the one hand and the radical syndicalists of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) and the socialist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)—the Wobblies—on the other. It is not surprising, given the generally independent and conservative bent of Portuguese immigrants, that the Portuguese restauranteur John P. Silva, around whose death this drama unfolded, would come down on the side of the anti-unionists.[59] When Silva stepped out of his Ramsey Street restaurant in Goldfield and threatened Morrie Preston with a pistol on the night of June 10, 1907, he not only lost his life but set in motion a chain of events that ultimately led to the conspiracy conviction of unionists Preston and Joseph Smith and the gutting of the power of the WFM and the IWW in Nevada.[60]

While the great majority of Portuguese immigrants were always listed in the United States Census enumerations as laborers, there was an evolution over the decades from mine labor to farm labor. In 1904 a California Portuguese-language newspaper described the Portuguese colony in Yerington, which was growing rapidly, according to the correspondent.[61] A shift had been taking place in the Portuguese communities in Nevada. Their center was moving from the northeast region of the state—Elko, northern Lander, and eastern Humboldt counties—to the growing agricultural areas of Mason Valley, Stillwater/Fallon, and Lovelock, and to the Reno/Sparks area.

Most Portuguese in Lovelock were involved in general farming or in the sheep operations of John G. Taylor. Two Azorians—Manuel Moreira, from Santa Maria Island, and Frank Mancebo, from Flores—became sheep bosses for Taylor. Most, however, apparently worked at other occupations. According to Byrd Wall Sawyer, "For the most part, the men and women who worked at the various ranch headquarters were Portuguese from the Azores Islands. Often couples were employed at headquarters where the wife cooked and kept house while the man served as a milker and general chore man."[62] Many later went into ranching or farming in the area. Mancebo became a rancher but also opened two dry-goods stores in partnership with another Azorian, also a former sheepherder, Frank Penque. Their Azores Mercantile Store was located in Lovelock, and the Azores Store was in Fallon.

In Fallon and Yerington, but particularly in Reno, Portuguese took up an occupation familiar to them in the Azores—dairying. The Portuguese in Nevada, as in California, have a long history in the dairy industry, there being at least two Portuguese dairies in Gold Hill during 1880–81.[63] A 1925 study of the Nevada dairy industry concludes that 73 percent of the state's dairies were concentrated in just four counties: Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, and Washoe. According to the study, a quarter of the state's dairymen were Portuguese.[64]

Successful Portuguese in Nevada were not reluctant to participate in civic affairs, and they were active in encouraging education for their children. Citizenship appears to have been of considerable importance to these immigrants, with the rates of naturalization previously cited for the Comstock repeated or

The Azores Store in Fallon in the late 1930s. (*Churchill County Museum*)

exceeded in other areas as well. The Portuguese were not averse to entering politics, primarily on the Republican side. Although their campaigns for office often were not successful, there seems to have been no lack of will to throw their hats into the political arena. Republican Joseph Mendes ran unsuccessfully in 1884 for Eureka County commissioner and was justice of the peace for a time in Duckwater, as was his brother William. William was voter registry agent for Duckwater in 1894, and in 1898 was appointed road supervisor of Eastern Nye County District. Frank Mattos was defeated as an 1886 candidate for Lewis District road supervisor, a position that could have benefited his stage company. John A. Gomes of Golconda was appointed constable in Battle Mountain (Argenta Township) in 1896, and ran unsuccessfully for the State Assembly in 1906 as a Republican.[65] In later years the Portuguese and their American-born descendants have been more successful, mostly in local elections in Churchill, Lyon, and Pershing counties.

Education was significant, at least for those who could afford to send their children out of the more remote areas. John Gomes sent his son to live with relatives in the state of Washington so that he could complete his high school education. The children of William Mendes, who had become a Mason, went to Salt Lake City for schooling, and a son later went on to attend the University of Santa Clara. Frank Martin's two sons and three daughters were graduated from

college—four from the University of Nevada—in the first decades of this century, and all became teachers.

The state's heritage from its early Portuguese communities consists of a few toponyms and the Azorian *festas*. The remote locations of the place names attest to the rural nature of Portuguese settlement. Portuguese Mountain and Portuguese Springs in Nye County, some twelve miles southwest of Duckwater in the Pancake Range, are a legacy of the activities of the Mendes brothers. There is also a Portuguese Spring in White Pine County south of Jiggs, near the Eureka County line. Other places named after Portuguese include Caton Ranch and Caton Spring in Lander County, as well as a former station of the same name on the Nevada Central Railroad north of Austin (all named for the nineteenth-century Austin farmer Emmanuel Caton); Freitas Spring in Nye County (the name Freitas is unique to Portuguese and is the most common Portuguese surname in Nevada); Souza Spring (again uniquely Portuguese) in Pershing County (possibly after Antonio Machado Souza, Rye Patch sheepman early in this century).[66] Other possible attributions are Borges Spring in Elko County (after Louis Borges, sheepman in nearby North Fork in 1910); Caetano Ranch (after Manuel Caton, his name Anglicized from Caetano, who farmed near Cortez in 1910); and Weeks Canyon, southeast of Ione (from the Portuguese John Weeks, owner of a ranch at Spanish Springs, a few miles north of the canyon). In addition, Machado Creek in northern Elko County, which Ruth Carlson puzzles over in her compendium of geographic names, may bear the name of long-time Carlin rancher Manuel Machado or perhaps that of Joe Machado of Tuscarora, both Elko County residents at the beginning of the century.[67]

It was not until well after the turn of the century that the Portuguese, now established in stable agricultural communities, began to set up ethnic organizations. In 1917 branches of the Portuguese Union of the State of California (UPEC after its Portuguese name) were founded in Reno, Lovelock, and Yerington; a branch in Fallon followed in 1935. (The parent California organization had begun in 1880, while the first Portuguese society was established in San Francisco in 1868.) The first Portuguese Pentecostal festival, the Feast of the Holy Ghost—a uniquely Azorian religious celebration—was celebrated in Yerington in 1919, and later in Fallon (1929), Reno (1934), and Lovelock (1935). These celebrations still take place each spring in the three cities outside of Reno, providing a motive for Azorians and their descendants to travel the *festa* circuit, reuniting families and renewing friendships and ethnic ties in California, Nevada, and Idaho.

The immigration laws of the 1920s that stifled southern European immigration to the United States curtailed the further growth of the Portuguese population within the state of Nevada. When immigration from the Azores again became significant, in the 1960s, Nevada was no longer a destination.

The Portuguese in Nevada, mainly immigrants from the Azores, brought with them values similar in many ways to those of Turner's pioneer models. Their industriousness and entrepreneurial spirit often paid handsome rewards. Their pragmatism and their frequent association with individuals outside their ethnic group greatly aided the Portuguese to assimilate. The region did not change them as much as it allowed them—as it had the Germans, Irish, Italians, and others—to realize their potentials, within the limitations of their socioeconomic backgrounds. Thus, the environment of the West, and of Nevada in particular, presented these Atlantic islanders with the opportunity to flourish, and in so doing to make a solid contribution to the region's early development.

Notes

[1]See Eduardo Mayone Dias, "Portuguese Immigration to the East Coast of the United States and California: Contrasting Patterns," in Thomas C. Bruneau *et al.*, *Portugal in Development: Emigration, Industrialization, the European Community* (Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 1984), 111–19; M. Estellie Smith, "Portuguese Enclaves: The Invisible Minority," in Thomas K. Fitzgerald, ed., *Social and Cultural Identity: Problems of Persistence and Change* (Athens, Ga.: Southern Anthropological Society, 1974), 81–91; and Sandra Wolforth, *The Portuguese in America* (San Francisco: R & E Associates, 1978), 78.

[2]Albin J. Cofone, "Themes in the Italian Settlement of Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 25 (Summer 1982), 119.

[3]*Ibid.*, 121.

[4]*Ibid.*, 116.

[5]*Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpreters* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970), 7.

[6]Today three-fourths of all Portuguese-Americans reside in just four states: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, California, and Hawaii. Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, and Oxford, England: University of California Press, 1990), 51.

[7]William J. Trimble, *The Mining Advance into the Inland Empire* (1914; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1972).

[8]See further T. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972). An indication of the islands' commercial significance in the eighteenth century is the fact that Faial in the Azores (as well as Funchal in Madeira) was among the first locations to gain consular representation from the young American republic in 1790 (Walter Smith II, "America's Diplomats and Consuls of 1776–1865," Occasional Paper no. 2, Occasional Paper Series [Washington, D.C.: The Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, 1986], 71).

[9]João Afonso, "Baleação pelos Açores na Dinâmica Atlântica desde o Século XVIII," *Os Açores e as Dinâmicas do Atlântico; Do Descobrimento à II Guerra Mundial* (Angra do Heroísmo, Portugal: Instituto Histórico da Ilha Terceira, 1990), 1285.

[10]*Ibid.*, 1285.

[11]*United States Census of the Population, 1940*, vol. II, p. 4, "Characteristics of the Population," 739 (future references to United States censuses will be by date only). In totaling the Portuguese one must include the population from the separate category of "Atlantic Islands." Since many from the Portuguese islands identified their origins specifically, while others simply claimed "Portugal," the relative numbers are meaningless.

[12]The maximum Portuguese population in the state, 347, was reached in 1910.

[13]"Census of the Inhabitants of the State of Nevada, 1875," 2 vols., *Appendix to Journals of Senate and Assembly, of the Eighth Session of the Legislature of the State of Nevada*, vols. 2, 3 (Carson City, 1877) (cited hereafter by census date only).

[14]Shepperson, *Restless Strangers*, 52.

[15]In addition, twenty-nine Portuguese were naturalized in the county in 1872. "Index to Names of Persons Naturalized in the First Judicial Court, 1861–1906," Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.

[16]*Territorial Enterprise*, 12 July 1878; John Taylor Waldorf, *A Kid on the Comstock; Illustrated with the Original Cartoons by Herb Roth from "The Bulletin" and with Biographical and Background Material by Dolores Waldorf Bryant* (Berkeley: The Friends of the Bancroft Library, 1969), 27.

[17]Waldorf, *Kid on the Comstock*, 25.

[18]It is now Portuguese Lane (Mrs. Eleanor Kent, Fallon, Nevada interview with author, 31 January 1987).

[19]Shepperson, *Restless Strangers*, 58–59.

[20]"One point is clear. The original immigration and adaptation experience of the Portuguese was solid, based on values of hard work and sobriety which fit the climate. But illiteracy and peasant naïveté, combined with forms of discrimination and prejudice, retarded the advancement of many Portuguese, particularly in urban areas. Discrimination and prejudice clearly affected their life style, for such animosity placed the immigrant in an inferior position within the community as a whole. This, in turn, affected the immigrant's self-image, often making him willing to accept the most menial place within society" (Wolforth, *Portuguese in America*, 87, on the Portuguese experience in New England).

[21]Harry M. Gorham, *My Memories of the Comstock* (Los Angeles and San Francisco: Suttonhouse, 1939), 167–68.

[22]Shepperson, *Restless Strangers*, 63; Cofone, *"Themes in Italian Settlement,"* 27.

[23]*United States Census*, 1870, 1880; Assessment Roll, Storey County.

[24]Deeds, Storey County, Book 50, pp. 524-25, Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno. It should be noted that the the Anglicization of names was extremely common among nineteenth-century Portuguese immigrants. "Joe King" was commonly derived from the given name of Joaquim (pronounced zhwahking) because of the similarity in pronunciation. Besides phonetic adaptations, names were sometimes translated (Neves became "Snow," etcetera), or unrelated American surnames were chosen for a variety of reasons. Often Portuguese and Spanish orthography was confused, e.g., Portuguese Gomes became Gomez and vice versa.

[25]*Pioche Weekly Record*, 13 September 1894.

[26]"To Some Men I Know," *Sagebrush Soliloquies* (Reno: Nevada State Journal, 1919), 8.

[27]*United States Census*, 1870; John F. Uhlhorn, comp., *The Virginia and Truckee Railroad Directory, 1873–74* (Sacramento: H. S. Crocker and Co., 1873), 96; Elmer Rusco, *"Good Times Coming?" Black Nevadans in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 1975), 137.

[28]Antone Roch, Virginia City (1870); Teofilo Perurci (Pereira?), Hamilton, White Pine County (1870); and M. Costello, Elko County (1875). For a table of occupations of blacks in the nineteenth century, see Rusco, *"Good Times Coming?"* 136–37.

[29]Dias, "Portuguese Immigration," 116.

[30]Wolforth, *Portuguese in America*, 139.

[31]The social function of the barbershop and the tonsorial role of the Portuguese in New England in the nineteenth century has been described in Henry R. Lange, "The Portuguese Element in New England" (1897), in Carlos E. Cortés, *Portuguese Americans and Spanish Americans* (New York: Aron Press, 1980), 10.

[32]Wolforth, *Portuguese in America*, 49.

[33]Dias, 111.

[34]*People's Advocate* (Austin, Nevada), 11 February, 11 March 1891.

[35]Shepperson, *Restless Strangers*, 7.

[36]Nell Murbarger, "Seventy Years in a Country Store," *Sovereigns of the Sage* (Tucson: Treasure Chest Publications, 1958), 39.

[37]In California the Portuguese have historically been the most rural foreign ethnic group. Frederick G. Bohme, "The Portuguese in California" (1956), in Cortés, *Portuguese Americans*, 246.

[38]In 1872 three Portuguese, Joseph Caetano, Jose Conde, and A. J. Hawk (presumably Antonio Falcão, later Falcon), along with two individuals of Spanish surname, deeded to San Pedro for $5.00 their location on part of the Esta Bueno lode near the Ione Valley town of Ellsworth (Deeds, Nye County, Book G, 360–61).

[39]Myron Angel, *History of Nevada; With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (1881; rpt. Berkeley: Howell-North, 1958), 140.

[40]Assessment Roll, Humboldt County, 1879, p. 47, County Courthouse, Winnemucca.

[41]Iron Mountain and Knight quadrangles.

[42]Velma S. Truett, *On the Hoof in Nevada* (Los Angeles: Gehrett-Truett-Hall, 1950), 139, 197; Assessment Roll, Humboldt County, 1875.

[43]"Constitution, Bylaws, Order of Business, and Rules of Order of the Miners' Union of Gold Hill, Nevada. Organized December 8th, 1866," Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno; *Eureka Daily Sentinel*, 7 January 1873; *Eureka's Yesterdays: A Guide to a Historic Central Nevada Town* (Reno: Nevada Historical Society, 1988), 33; Assessment Roll, Eureka County, 1873, 1880, 1883; L. M. McKenney, *Pacific Coast Directory for 1886–87* (San Francisco: L. M. McKenney Co., 1886), 880; *White Pine News*, 11 September 1886.

[44]"Community and Material Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paradise Valley, Nevada" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1987), 38. See also Shepperson, *Restless Strangers*, 54.

[45]*White Pine News*, 8 July 1897; *United States Census*, 1880; Lynn Maxfield, interview with author, Reno, Nevada, 26 May 1987.

[46]Deeds, Nye County, Book J, p. 374.

[47]Assessment Roll, Nye County, 1900; William E. Mendes, interview with author, Minden, Nevada, 15 November 1987; Inez Dugan, telephone interview with author, Murray, Utah, 8 April 1990.

[48]Frederick Jackson Turner, "Contributions of the West to American Democracy," *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), 257–59.

[49]*Reno Evening Gazette*, 4 August 1909. The first court battle, *B. B. Strait et al.* v. *C. A. Brown et al.* (1877), made its way to the Nevada Supreme Court. This case and the later *Louisa Irwin* v. *J. C. Tognoni et al.* (1909) were ultimately both decided in favor of the lower valley residents. The water battles and related violence of Duckwater are discussed from the point of view of the Tognoni family in Becky Boudway, *Treasure in the Dust: Enduring Gold and Silver's Century of Divorce* (Fresno, Calif.: Panorama West Books, 1985), 93–116. The *Gazette* sketch of Mendes appeared later in Arthur V. Buel's *Notable Nevadans: Snap-shots of Sagebrushers Who Are Doing Things* (Reno: n.p., 1910), [102].

[50]Beltran Paris, as told to William A. Douglass, *Beltran: Basque Sheepman of the American West* (Reno: University of Reno Press, 1979), xii.

[51]Major William Shepherd, *Prairie Experiences in Handling Cattle and Sheep* (New York: O. Judd Co., 1885), 124.

[52]Edith Machado (daughter of Frank Martin), interview with author, Hayward, California, 9 March 1989; Assessment Rolls, Humboldt, Lander, and Washoe counties.

[53]Edith Machado and Mary McClaskey (both, daughters of Frank Martin), interview with author, Hayward, California, 20 October 1990.

[54]Vivian Manha, interview with Geoffrey Gomes, Turlock, California, 11 March 1989; John M. Gomes, interview with author, Reno, Nevada, 19 December 1989; *The Humboldt Miner*, 1 March 1902.

[55]L. M. McKenney, *McKenney's Business Directory of the Principal Towns of California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska* (Sacramento: H. S. Crocker Co., 1882), 620; *White Pine News*, 14 September 1889.

[56]*Directory of Reno and Washoe County, 1902* (Reno: J. F. Haley, 1902); *United States Census*, 1910; Declarations of Intention, Washoe County.

[57]Ellsworth Daggett, "Appendix A to the Report upon the Condition of the Nevada Co.'s Property in Berlin, Nevada, February 1st, 1908," Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno.

[58]*Some Remembered . . . Some Forgot: Life in Central Nevada Mining Camps* (Carson City: Nevada State Park Natural History Association, 1974), 8; Firmin Bruner, Interview with author, Fallon, Nevada, 14 June 1990.

[59]Silva is possibly the same John P. Silva who was a proprietor of the Dairy Restaurant in Carson in 1890 (1890–91 Directory-Carson City, card file, Nevada Historical Society, Reno).

[60]See Sally Zanjani and Guy Rocha, *The Ignoble Conspiracy: Radicalism on Trial in Nevada* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986), 1, 2, *et passim*. The conservative *Tonopah Sun* presented a distorted version of the killing in its 11 March 1907 front-page political cartoon, reproduced in the text.

[61]The community had its own physician and surgeon, Dr. João P. Martins, and from 1917 to 1922 it was to have as priest at the Catholic church a compatriot, Father Joseph Cunha. *O Arauto* (Oak-

land), 16 April, 29 May 1904; Ione Minister, comp., *A Journal of 100 Years; Catholic Life in Yerington and Smith Valley Nevada* (n.p.: Carson Valley Printing Co., 1986), 2.

[62]Byrd Wall Sawyer, *Nevada Nomads: A Story of the Sheep Industry* (San Jose, Calif.: Harlan-Young Press, 1971), 65.

[63]Those of Philomeno Frates (*United States Census of 1880*) and Manuel Frates (*Territorial Enterprise*, 13 January 1881).

[64]Scott B. Harrington, "Economic Survey of the Dairy Industry in Nevada" (M.A. thesis, University of Nevada, 1925), 20.

[65]"County Political Directory," card file, Nevada Historical Society, Reno.

[66]For Caton, see Helen S. Carlson, *Nevada Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1974), 72.

[67]Carlson, *Nevada Place Names* 162; Declarations of Intention, Elko County, Book II, p. 50 (1906); Assessor Roll, Elko County, 1905. All the toponyms mentioned are listed in "Nevada Geographic Names" (January 1991), Mines Library, Mackay School of Mines, University of Nevada, Reno.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS
SAINT MARY'S IN THE MOUNTAINS
The Cradle of Catholicism in Western Nevada

Vincent A. Lapomarda, S. J.

Today, my dear friends, we come together to dedicate here in Virginia City a plaque that marks the historical development of the Catholic Church for more than 125 years in this section of God's kingdom. Although Franciscan missionaries may have passed through this part of the country on their way to the missions in California in the eighteenth century, it was not until the nineteenth century, following the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859, that the historical roots of Catholicism in Nevada really manifested themselves. "Anything over 100 years old is historic in the American West," according to one expert on Saint Mary's past.[1] Consequently, what we do here today is remarkable for this commemoration and celebration of the history of American Catholicism.

On the occasion of this dedication, it may be helpful to recall the heritage of Saint Mary's in the Mountains in order to understand how it has helped to develop American society. Perhaps the best way to do this is to reflect on the extent to which Catholics in Nevada have contributed to religious liberty and the Americanization of the immigrants, as well as to the social program of the Catholic Church and to its parochial school system. Historians, from Thompson and West down to the present, have given us sufficient information about the history of Saint Mary's so that we can really appreciate the growth of Catholicism in this part of the country.[2]

First, to what extent has Saint Mary's contributed to American religious liberty?

Freedom of religion and religious liberty have marched side by side in the

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This address, delivered in his capacity as chairman of the Committee on Historical Memorials, International Order of Alhambra, marked the dedication, on July 28, 1991, of a plaque designating Saint Mary's of the Mountains in Virginia City as a national Catholic historical site.

shaping of the American West since the First Amendment to the United States Constitution came into being two hundred years ago. This has made it possible for Saint Mary's, like many other religious institutions in the United States, to flourish, especially after Nevada became a state in 1864 and incorporated religious toleration into its state constitution.

In western Nevada, all this found expression in the work of three pioneers of religious freedom for Roman Catholics. The first was Father Joseph Gallagher (1821–87), who was the earliest resident priest in this state and who offered the first mass in this part of the state. The second was Father Hugh P. Gallagher (1815–82), his brother, who built the first Catholic church in Virginia City once it was settled, in the summer of 1860. And the third was Father Patrick Manogue (1831–95), later Bishop of Sacramento, who expanded the foundations of the Catholic Church in the bonanza days of Virginia City.

What those early priests did for the free exercise of religion in Nevada was continued in subsequent years. Today there exists in this state an organized diocese centered at Reno and Las Vegas with at least 155,000 Catholics able to live their faith without being restricted by civil authority. Though their average number is lower than in the nation as a whole, Nevada Catholics constitute a significant 15 percent of the population. They are served by at least seventy-five priests and about a hundred sisters, who help them to exercise religious liberty and to enjoy religious freedom.[3]

Second, to what extent has Saint Mary's contributed to the Americanization of the immigrants?

Since many of the miners who came to Virginia City were of Irish background, the Catholic Church took advantage of Irish priests like the Gallagher brothers, Manogue, and others to help the immigrants adjust to American society on the western frontier. At that time, it can be shown, religion was at least a major, if not the only, civilizing force in a world dominated by the mining of much gold but more silver and by the ephemeral attractions of a booming frontier town, especially with its hundred or more saloons. The evils of the latter were so prominent that an Irish missionary like Father Patrick Hennebery strenuously promoted temperance among the miners here in 1874.[4]

The Catholic Church, as one of the few churches in Virginia City, accomplished much during the last century by helping the immigrants adjust to a new life in this country. Many came to this mining area of the Sierra Nevada range from such countries as Italy, Germany, England, China, and Canada, in addition to Ireland. As the Catholic Church cared for the Paiute Indians in the nineteenth century, she is reaching out today to other minorities, like blacks and Hispanics, along with the Indians and the immigrants, struggling for survival in the state's major urban centers.[5]

Third, to what extent has Saint Mary's contributed to the social program of the Catholic Church?

Though the social encyclicals of the popes were not promulgated until later in

the last century, the Reverend Patrick Manogue, appointed Pastor of Virginia City in 1862, had the vision to launch a social program for the Catholic Church. In this flourishing mining town of at least 25,000 in its peak years, an orphanage and a hospital were started under the Daughters of Charity, who had come to Virginia City from Market Street in San Francisco. The orphanage (1864–97), fronted on H Street, cared for about a hundred orphans, and the hospital (1876–97), fronting on Union Street, provided medical care for the people of Virginia City and its environs.[6]

In that way, particularly with the financial assistance of John William Mackay, one of the Bonanza Barons, the foundations of a social program for the Catholic Church were established in Nevada.[7] Today Catholics of this diocese still reflect that same exceptional concern for the social program of their church. They are supporting four Catholic hospitals and a number of day-care and health centers in cities like Reno and Las Vegas, just as their predecessors did here in Virginia City during the nineteenth century when society had its share of bandits, drunkards, and murderers.[8]

Fourth, to what extent has Saint Mary's contributed to the Catholic school system?

We know, for example, that among the Reverend Patrick Manogue's achievements was a school for boys (Saint Vincent's) and another for girls (Saint Mary's). From their opening in 1864 to their closing in 1897, these schools cared daily for about a hundred boys and two hundred girls under twelve years of age. The Daughters of Charity were also in charge of these schools, which were the first ones for Catholics in Nevada providing for the intellectual development of young girls and boys.

In subsequent years the Catholic school system, in what is now the Diocese of Reno-Las Vegas, has expanded. Today it includes eleven elementary schools with an enrollment of 2,888 students and two high schools with an enrollment of 1,191 students. Thus, Nevada Catholics are strongly determined to have their children learn the proper religious and moral values essential to cope with the problems of today's world.

Consequently, as we examine the historical roots of Saint Mary's in the Mountains and evaluate them in light of today's achievements, we can understand more clearly why this Bonanza Church of the Comstock Lode is the cradle of Catholicism in western Nevada. The social, religious, moral, liturgical, and intellectual lives of Catholics were enriched as the Catholic Church became one of the major civilizing forces on the mining frontier where fortunes in gold and silver were accumulated. Indeed, the basic services in the area of education, health, and welfare that are now provided by the civil authorities to care for the needy in this state were launched at that time by the Catholics of Virginia City at their own expense.[9]

Therefore, it is very appropriate that we commemorate and celebrate the achievements of Saint Mary's by dedicating a bronze plaque today. Though the

Father Patrick Manogue, a builder of the Catholic Church in early-day Nevada, later the Bishop of Sacramento. (*Nevada Historical Society*)

new plaque only highlights the contributions that I have outlined, it is a reminder for present and future generations of the major role that Saint Mary's has played in the development of religion and culture in this part of God's kingdom. While Saint Mary's has been a pioneer in contributing to the health of American society, this "church stands today as the most significant monument in the most famous mining town of the Western frontier."[10] Mindful, then, of this rich heritage of the Catholic Church in Virginia City, I will be very pleased to unveil the plaque that marks Saint Mary's in the Mountains as a national Catholic historical site.

Notes

[1]Virgil A. Bucchianeri, *Saint Mary's in the Mountains: Nevada's Bonanza Church* (Gold Hill, Nevada, 1984), xiii. Dan De Quille's *The Big Bonanza,* first published in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1876, is perhaps the earliest account of the Comstock Lode.

[2]See Myron Angel, ed. *History of Nevada* (Oakland, Calif., Thompson and West, 1881), esp. ch. 27, "The Roman Catholic Church," 205 ff.

[3]Statistics on the Catholic Church today are taken from P. J. Kenedy and Sons, *The Official Catholic Directory* (New York, New York, 1991), 820–21.

[4]See Bucchianeri, *Saint Mary's,* 8, on Father Hennebery. According to Muriel Sibell Wolle, *The Bonanza Trail* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1953), the ore mined from 1859 to 1938 was 55 percent in silver.

[5]According to Elmer R. Rusco, *"Good Times Coming?" Black Nevadans in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Conn., 1975), 128, 174, blacks (there were ninety-two in Virginia City in 1880) were mostly Baptists and Methodists.

[6]For more on Father Manogue, see Henry L. Walsh, *Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails* (Santa Clara, 1946).

[7]See Oscar Lewis, *Silver Kings* (Reno, Nevada, 1986), for a study of the four leaders in the mining of silver—John W. Mackay, James G. Fair, James C. Flood, and William S. O'Brien. De Quille dedicated his work to Mackay.

[8]See William S. Greever, *The Bonanza West: The Story of the Western Mining Rushes, 1848–1900* (Norman, Okla. 1963), 98 ff.

[9]Though Greever, *Bonanza West,* 140, downplays the effectiveness of religious bodies compared to other influences on the mining frontier, church membership statistics in Nevada are generally lower than the nation as a whole, as underscored by Leon L. Loofbourow, *Steeples among the Sage* (Stockton, Calif., 1964), 68. Certainly, what might be true regarding the effectiveness of Protestantism is not necessarily true of Catholicism in Virginia City.

[10]Bucchianeri, *Saint Mary's,* xiii.

BOOK REVIEWS

Creating the West: Historical Interpretations, 1890–1990. By Gerald D. Nash. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991, 318 pp., notes, bibliography, index.)

A helpful overview of a century of western historical writings by one of the region's most distinguished historians, *Creating the West* helps mark the centennial of what Gerald Nash calls "the supposed closing of the western frontier." According to the author, historians have over the years developed four perceptions of the West: as frontier, as region, as urban civilization, and as mythical utopia. To each of these topics Nash devotes a chapter within which he uses a chronological approach to review the major publications and interpretations that have shaped the course of western historiography. Nash's encyclopedic knowledge of the subject adds to the book's importance.

The chapter on western urbanization is particularly well done. Beginning with Adna Weber's keen observation in 1891 that the states west of the Missouri River had a larger percentage of their populations living in cities than did the northern central states, Nash takes the reader on a historiographical tour that includes works of Lewis Mumford, Constance Green, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., Richard Wade, Carl Abbott, and others. Along the way, schools of interpretation are related to larger events in the profession (e.g., the New History movement of James Harvey Robinson, the New Left of the 1960s) and the nation (World War II, postwar globalization). For Turnerites, there is especially good coverage of the Turner frontier thesis as part of the American myth.

Of course, as in any work of this scope, there are omissions. Nevadans will miss a discussion of John Findlay's *People of Chance,* a revealing cultural interpretation of Las Vegas. Elsewhere, while Nash credits Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., with influencing a number of key western historians, he misses the connection with Richard Wade, whose book *The Urban Frontier* posed a mighty challenge to the Turner thesis and who was one of Schlesinger's last doctoral students at Harvard.

Perhaps the book's major problem is its matter-of-fact style. At times, Nash is a bit too generous and uncritical. Obviously, Lawrence Larsen's *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* is far less valuable than Carl Abbott's works on the sunbelt, yet both receive about the same space and comment. Then, too, some

books simply command more attention. For example, too little space is given Patricia Limerick's *Legacy of Conquest*. While Nash may not completely agree with her view of the Turner thesis, he nevertheless should have devoted a page or more to the considerable debate her book engendered within the profession following its publication in 1987.

These concerns do not, however, detract from the over-all value of Nash's book. It is perhaps the best overview of general western history (rather than of specific subfields) published in a generation. While Nash does not use this study as a vehicle to propose a new hypothesis about the development of western history, his analysis does provide needed context and perspective for those in the field.

Eugene P. Moehring
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

A History of Tonopah, Nevada. By Robert D. McCracken. (Tonopah: Nye County Press, 1990, 225 pp., introduction, notes, bibliography.)

Tonopah: The Greatest, the Richest, and the Best Mining Camp in the World. By Robert D. McCracken. (Tonopah: Nye County Press, 1990, 75 pp., preface, illustrations, bibliography.)

Since the publication of Russell R. Elliott's *Nevada's Twentieth Century Mining Boom: Tonopah, Goldfield, Ely* by the University of Nevada Press in 1966, there has been considerable scholarly and popular writing on Tonopah, but no books. We now have two. Funded by a grant from the United States Department of Energy as a part of the impact studies for the proposed nuclear waste storage facility at Yucca Mountain, the books take a different tack from Elliott's pioneering work, add much to what we know of the history of the town, and carry the chronicle to recent times.

In the first of these, *A History of Tonopah, Nevada,* Robert McCracken, an anthropologist by training, initially focuses upon the prehistoric peoples of that isolated section of the Great Basin and life among the native population subsequent to exploration and settlement. He also summarizes the exploration period, 1826–54, the creation of Nye County in 1864, and the various boundary adjustments that have taken place over the years. The summary account of early-day man in the Austin and Belmont areas and in Smokey Valley and the Toiyabe Range is particularly well done, although there is little that is new.

Relying upon Elliott's chronicle, McCracken includes information from more recent scholarship, oral histories conducted in connection with the impact stud-

ies, and insights available only to a third-generation native of Tonopah. He also brings a human touch to his study and provides the reader with a more intensive examination of the early locators, the families, the businessmen, politics, and the recent military significance of the area.

Oral histories, of necessity, add an anecdotal touch that might upset more academic historians, but they contribute much to the reader's understanding of life as it actually was. The section on life in the mines is particularly insightful, and the chapter on organized labor and socialism breaks new ground. The same is the case with the author's treatment of women, children, and the foreign-born.

Although focusing upon Tonopah, the book also touches upon such peripheral areas as Millers and the mining camps of the Kawich country. The author includes an excellent chapter on ranch life in Nye County and comments upon the relationship between ranching and mining.

The decline of mining after the Tonopah-Belmont fire of October 31, 1939, and the increasing reliance of the area on military expenditures since the establishment of the Tonopah Army Air Base on the eve of World War II wrap up the book.

McCracken's second book, *Tonopah: The Greatest, the Richest, and the Best Mining Camp in the World,* is a briefer account, summarizing the history chronicled in the first volume and including photographs related to the text. As a marketing ploy, this will no doubt work, but the author might well have done it all up in one volume. The books are being handled by the Central Nevada Museum, Tonopah, and can be ordered through that institution.

Phillip I. Earl
Nevada Historical Society

A History of Pahrump, Nevada. By Robert D. McCracken. (Tonopah, Nevada: Nye County Press, 1990, 170 pp., introduction, bibliography, index.)

Pahrump: A Valley Waiting to Become a City. By Robert D. McCracken. (Tonopah, Nevada: Nye County Press, 1990, 77 pp., preface, illustrations, bibliography, index.)

For the past decade, there has been a continuing public debate in Nevada over the establishment of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nye County. Among the impact studies funded by the United States Department of Energy are histories of the communities and the areas likely to be affected. The first of these are now off the press and available through the Central Nevada Museum, Tonopah.

Book reviewers usually include some commentary on previous works that might have touched upon the subject of the review, but this is not possible in

this case since there are no extant histories of Pahrump Valley. Based upon obscure anthropological studies, oral histories from residents of the area, materials from periodicals, private archival collections, and newspapers, these books break new ground on every page and ensure that this growing area will never again be ignored in the writing and teaching of the history of our state.

The author, Robert D. McCracken, an anthropologist and a native of Tonopah, might be expected to pen a better chronicle of the physical setting and the history of the native peoples who once inhabited the area, but he does an impressive job of writing on ranching, mining, land use, agriculture, and recent history.

A continuing theme in both volumes is the availability of water, the resource that sustained precontact peoples and attracted the first European, Mexican, and American explorers in the 1820s, as well as the early-day ranchers and current residents of the valley. The sections on ranching, agriculture, and land use are narrative as well as anecdotal, providing much background on such unknown characters as Mormon Charlie, a Paiute who is credited with founding the first ranch in the late 1860s, Charles Bennett, another early-day rancher, Aaron and Rosalie Winters, Death Valley borax pioneers, and half a hundred others who have contributed to the history of the valley over the years, but have seldom found a place in the historical literature of the state.

Among the phases of history covered in the first volume are the controversy over the Von Schmidt survey of the Nevada-California border, the Federal State Select Lands Program, the impact of the twentieth-century mining boom, the persistent lawlessness that characterized the valley in the early days, and the attempts in the 1930s to promote dude ranching and the rudiments of an economy based upon gambling. The rise and fall of cotton cultivation is also chronicled, as is the development of the valley's infrastructure: education, businesses, newspapers, roads, aviation facilities, telephone service, and the electrification of the area.

The subdivision of the valley since 1959 by southern California land developers and the shift in the economy from farming to land sales is handled in an uncritical manner since the ultimate impact of development and population growth cannot be assessed at this time. Otherwise the book is a fine study and a good read.

The second volume, *Pahrump: A Valley Waiting to Become a City,* is intended for readers who desire a shorter historical summary and biographical sketches of those citizens who have contributed their energies and initiatives to the development of the area in recent years. The book also includes several dozen historical and contemporary photographs. The offering of two volumes rather than one is obviously a marketing decision, but the two might well have been one.

Phillip I. Earl
Nevada Historical Society

Preserving the Game in the Vanishing West. By J. R. Jones. Preface by Margaret E. Murie. (Boise: Hemingway Western Studies Center/Boise State University, 1989, 172 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index.)

J. R. Jones was a "devilish good romancer" who told entertaining stories. One of his published articles alerted the nation to the sad condition of the elk herds out west (though, according to a preface by Margaret Murie, he was wrong about the reason for their plight). Jones also argues for more wildlife refuges (though he was a big-game hunter's guide). And make no mistake as to his courage as a westerner "on the ground" in speaking out for wildlife protection (though not for all wildlife, as he did not like snakes, squirrels, wolves, eagles, foxes, or coyotes).

But what can the historian make of a book entitled *Preserving the Game in the Vanishing West* when it features a cover picture of its author sitting in a chair made of antlers with the curved trophy of a bighorn sheep on his lap? What can any reader make of a book with that title which devotes most of its pages to tales of gold-rush gamblers and prospectors, of homesteading, of big-game hunting expeditions? And what are we to make of the failure of the author and editor/compiler to reconcile the contradictions in Jones's career. Admittedly, the editor tries. Jones was forever decrying the avarice of gamblers and prospectors (he was both, at one time or another), but we learn that he came to Jackson Hole to investigate stories of hidden gold. He gambled on rising land prices and took a homestead, but failed as a farmer-stockman, became a merchant, then a hunting guide and occasional writer. The homestead was sold to the preservationists whose cause he championed because (we are told) he thought the land was best employed as a scenic tourist attraction and protected wildlife habitat. To account for Jones's dislike of wild predators, the editor (in a puzzling observation) says that Jones was no ecologist but rather a preservationist. These attempts to make Jones's career admirable in our environmentally conscious age do not ring true, any more than do attempts to make Ernest Hemingway's brand of outdoorsmanship respectable today. (The Hemingway Western Studies Center published this book.) No matter.

For the historian, no reconciliation or apology is necessary. Jones appears to have been a typical westerner trying to live off the land and his fellow westerners. Like other pioneers, he shot up the wildlife and encroached upon its habitat until the animals were almost gone and the land despoiled. Jones and the other westering Americans, like the coyotes they hated, were predators also and unwilling to admit it. They had a leading role in making the West vanish. Some of them even claimed it was not their fault but the fault of "foreign" sheep herders and the "tuskers from the slums of large cities" who killed elk to sell the teeth as watch fobs to members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. (Eventually, the B.P.O.E. helped to end this repulsive trade.) When the animal populations were depleted, the new goal of the pioneers was to preserve game

for local citizens and rich headhunters from the cities (who did not live in the slums). Although Jones was the first old-timer in his own spectacularly beautiful neighborhood to cast a lonesome vote for preservation, he did nothing inconsistent with his economic interests. In this Jones was a typical pioneer. And that is one hard, inescapable reality in the environmental history of the American West.

Morgan Sherwood
University of California, Davis

The Magnificent Mountain Women: Adventures in the Colorado Rockies. By Janet Robertson. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990, xxiv + 220 pp.)

In *The Magnificent Mountain Women,* Janet Robertson gives us a series of biographical sketches of women whose lives were intertwined with the Colorado mountains. Robertson's underlying theme is that the environment affected these women, and that their experiences increased later generations' appreciation of the mountains. Her goal is to enshrine the achievements of these magnificent women, who by their own desires "sought out the Colorado mountains in their own right, not just as wives and daughters of men" (p. xii).

Based on interviews and archival research, the book recounts the incidents and ordeals of dozens of noteworthy women, in roughly chronological order, from Julia Holmes's climb up Longs Peak in 1858 to Coral Bowman's establishment of a climbing school for women in the 1980s. Though climbing is a common link in the experiences of these women, this book is not a history of female mountaineering per se.

Robertson offers glimpses into the lives of a variety of women, from naturalists, environmental activists, and medical doctors to mountain climbers. She specifies that most of these women were highly educated and received strong support from males, both in climbing mountains and in their choices of lifestyles and occupations (women ended their reliance on male leadership in the mountains only in the 1970s). These women were frequently unmarried and apparently motivated to live outside the "normal" confines of female society. They withstood frequent criticism of their behavior, such as the disapproval in the 1870s of their practice of wearing trousers, not dresses, while climbing. That Robertson sees them as heroic and magnificent (a term she uses three times in the preface alone) is obvious, and is probably an appropriate response to the remarkable lives she chronicles.

Though the book is interesting for its glimpses into these lives, that is all it provides—glimpses. In the sections on Alice Eastwood and Katherine Hunter,

for example, Robertson's descriptions tantalize but never satisfy. The author's heartfelt portraits emphasize the humanity of her subjects, but they lack depth.

While Robertson's effort to uncover a little-noted part of the history of Colorado and of American women is laudable, a detailed analysis of that history is lacking. These women's stories are interesting, but they have no social context. Robertson's remarks about unorthodox lifestyles and dress are given little support. She does not explain how and why they are outside of American social norms, a defect most apparent in the sections on the more modern women. Their struggle with the elements is clear, but their unorthodoxy is obscure. Throughout the book the surrounding society and culture are all but invisible. Even the historical significance for women in climbing of the 1980 Shepherd and Ruwitch ascent of Longs Peak is weakly illuminated.

As a history of women, *The Magnificent Mountain Women* falls into the category described by Gerda Lerner as a history of "women worthies," or as "compensatory history." While histories of this sort have merit, they do not relate the women's significance to society. Such is the case with this book.

Though the general reader should find this book quite interesting, the specialist will be less satisfied with its dated approach. One hopes that in future endeavors Robertson will pursue similar material with equal sincerity and enthusiasm, but with more rigorous historical analysis as well.

Doug A. Mishler
University of Nevada, Reno

Federal Justice in California: The Court of Ogden Hoffman, 1851–1891. By Christian G. Fritz. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. xi + 256 pp. Tables, notes, index. $40.00.)

Christian G. Fritz's *Federal Justice in California: The Court of Ogden Hoffman, 1851–1891* is an extremely readable and detailed account of the life and judgeship of northern California's first federal court judge. This is an important book because most of the current completed work has been limited to the study of appellate justices and their courts. Fritz relies not only on the traditional sources, but also offers analysis based on thorough research of the case files and docket books.

Before assessing the main areas of Hoffman's judicial work (admiralty law, criminal prosecution, land titles, and the Chinese), Fritz begins with a biography and discussion of Hoffman's judicial ambitions. Fritz argues that in order to understand Hoffman's judgeship, the reader must be aware of Hoffman's extraordinary pride in himself and his family.

After graduation from Harvard Law School, Hoffman was lackadaisical about his legal career until he moved to California in 1850. Within a year, he was appointed judge of the Northern District Federal Court.

Throughout his forty-year tenure as federal judge for the Northern District, Hoffman remained unmarried and childless, completely devoted to his career. Hoping for higher office, he pursued a judgeship in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. His competitor was the chief justice of the California Supreme Court, Stephen J. Field. Field won the appointment, which positioned him for eventual appointment to the United States Supreme Court. This event was significant because it was the beginning of a strained relationship between Hoffman and Field. Their conflict is one of Fritz's main themes, and this work is thus also required reading for scholars interested in Stephen J. Field.

Fritz suggests that Hoffman's judicial reasoning was ahead of his time. For example, Fritz details Hoffman's dislike of the fellow-servant rule. The fellow-servant rule prevented an employee from suing his employer for injuries caused by the negligence of a fellow employee. Hoffman opposed the rule and suggested that it be replaced by one that made employers liable for all accidents except those which resulted from the plaintiff's own negligence. Hoffman's dicta was in marked contrast to most mid-1800s findings, which were favorable to business.

Fritz argues that while Hoffman was a believer in precedent, he was at times result oriented. Fritz concludes that Hoffman's court and Hoffman's personal identity became one, conclusions well argued in this absorbing and unique account of a nineteenth-century trial court.

Brenda Farrington-Myers
Fullerton College

NEW RESOURCE MATERIALS

Nevada Historical Society

James R. Judge Letters

James Judge, who arrived in Nevada as a young civil engineer in 1877 and who subsequently became an attorney, practiced law in Carson City from 1881 until his death in 1912. He took some time away from his profession for public service, twice running unsuccessfully for the state legislature in the 1880s, being appointed state attorney general in 1896, and winning the office of lieutenant governor in 1898 as a candidate of the Silver Party.

The Society has received, as a donation from Douglas McDonald, a letterbook containing copies of letters written by Judge in connection with his law practice from 1889 to 1892. Included is some correspondence with Adrian C. Ellis, in whose office Judge learned the law. Among matters dealt with in the letters are a dispute involving the construction of the federal court building in Carson City, land transactions, estate settlements, various civil suits, and other legal business. The volume is significant in that it reflects the activity of a late nineteenth-century Nevada law office, as well as the relationship of a prominent attorney with other lawyers and the courts.

Gold Hill Miners' Union Records

The Society's holdings of Gold Hill Miners' Union records have been substantially enhanced through a donation of nineteenth-century Comstock documents by Don Prusso. Among the materials are lists of registered voters and sample ballots from Storey County, a bank journal from the 1860s, a volume listing union members and dues payments (1882-1885), copies of the union's constitution and bylaws, some letters relating to members, and unissued stock certificates of the Miners' Union Hall Association, which was formed in 1868.

Miller and Lux, Quinn River Crossing Office Records

The firm of Miller and Lux (later the Pacific Livestock Company), was the largest operator of ranches in the Pacific and intermountain West at the end of the last century. Its vast holdings, which included lands in Nevada, were administered from the firm's San Francisco headquarters and various local "out-

side offices." One of these latter offices was located at the Quinn River Crossing Ranch in Humboldt County, Nevada.

A substantial collection of correspondence from the Quinn River office during the years 1897–1919 has recently been received from Mary Lee Wood, whose parents, George and Phyllis Hay, had the Quinn River Crossing Ranch for a time in the 1930s. The informative letters to office manager F. M. Payne from Henry Miller and other officials at the Miller and Lux headquarters provide a wealth of information on the firm's northern Nevada ranching operations, including data on the maintenance of herds, what supplies were being purchased—and at what prices—for various ranches, discussions about employees, and figures on wages being paid ranch hands and other workers.

Eric N. Moody
Manuscript Curator

University of Nevada, Reno
Special Collections Department

From the early 1930s through the 1950s, Nevada's national reputation was based on two activities—gambling and "easy" divorces. There has been good documentation available for the study of gambling but until now there was little original source material available for the study of the Nevada divorce industry. That has changed with the gift of the Harry and Joan Drackert papers to this department.

Harry Drackert was a native of Pony, Montana, and former national rodeo champion who came to Nevada in 1931. Harry managed several riding stables and then bought the Mt. Rose Guest Ranch in 1945, where he met Joan Abry Deeley, a native of Maryland who was establishing her Nevada residency. Harry moved on to manage the Pyramid Lake Guest Ranch while Joan became a hostess at the Donner Trail Guest Ranch. They married in 1950 and together they managed the Pyramid Lake and two other guest ranches, the Donner Trail (1959–1970) and the Silver Circle (1971–1976).

The Drackert collection provides a significant example and record of the Nevada guest ranch industry, which from 1931 to the mid-1960s was one of Nevada's most important economic mainstays. The bulk of the Nevada guest ranches drew their clientele from the East Coast of the U.S., where state laws made divorce a lengthy, messy, and oftentimes a very public event. Divorce laws in Nevada provided that an individual who could prove state residency of six weeks and whose spouse was agreeable could be divorced without extensive evidence of wrong-doing. Although staying at a guest ranch was not cheap, it provided a divorcing spouse with a comfortable vacation-like atmosphere and a "western" experience. Most of the clientele who took advantage of this opportunity were wealthy eastern women who departed Nevada on day 43 of their

stay, sometimes with a new husband. But many newly-divorced women and men stayed either because of their new love of the West or because of their lack of financial resources.

This collection provides a partial financial record of the industry and nearly complete guest list of those who stayed at the Drackert's three ranches from about 1950 to 1976. It also provides a glimpse of the experiences of former guests after they returned to their "normal" lives. Letters to Joan testify as to what they did when they returned home, as well as the lasting impression they gained of Nevada. They included the rich and famous and the formerly rich and famous forced to cope with reduced circumstances.

Other interests of the Drackerts which are documented include their Indian arts and crafts store, Indian Territory, Inc.; race horses and the Reno Rodeo; southwest Indian arts and crafts; and trapshooting. There are also papers of Harry's parents, Charles E. and Alice Richtmyer Drackert of Pony, Montana. An extensive collection of photographs accompanies these papers; a collection guide provides access to the papers.

An important collection of court documents for a recent northern Nevada water rights case was donated to the Special Collections Department by Charles E. Hancock. The collection dates from 1974–1986 and consists of 5.5 cubic feet of material.

The United States of America in its own right and in its fiduciary capacity on behalf of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT) brought a suit against the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID) and 17,000 others in 1973. This suit, case # Civil R-2987-JBA before the United States District Court for the District of Nevada sought to quiet title to the water rights of all users of the Truckee River. Those water rights had been decreed in 1944 in the case of United States vs Orr Water Ditch Company.

In the 1973 court case, the plaintiff, later joined by the PLPT, claimed for itself minor reserved water rights for the Toiyabe National Forest and the Stillwater Wildlife Refuge. On behalf of the tribe, the U.S. claimed that by implication, the creation of the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation in 1859 reserved for the benefit of its inhabitants sufficient water from the Truckee River for the maintenance and preservation of the fishery in Pyramid Lake. Also reserved were sufficient flows in the Truckee River for the natural spawning of the fish long relied upon by the Indians as a staple of their diet.

This case was eventually heard in the U.S. Supreme Court, which referred it back to the District Court for Nevada. This collection of documents includes copies of almost all papers filed with the several courts up until 1986. A guide is available to assist the researcher.

Susan Searcy
Manuscript Curator

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Founded in 1904, the Nevada Historical Society seeks to advance the study of the heritage of Nevada. The Society publishes scholarly studies, indexes, guidebooks, bibliographies, and the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly;* it collects manuscripts, rare books, artifacts, historical photographs and maps, and makes its collections available for research; it maintains a museum at its Reno facility; and it is engaged in the development and publication of educational materials for use in the public schools.